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Francis of Assisi

The little flowers of St. Francis  
of Assisi.

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The World's Classics

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THE LITTLE FLOWERS  
OF ST. FRANCIS  
AND  
THE LIFE OF BROTHER GILES

## SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Born, at Assisi . . . . .	c. 1182
Died . . . . .	3 Oct. 1226

The Little Flowers of Saint Francis was compiled in Italian or Latin by an unknown writer in the fourteenth century from the Latin Actas B. Francisci et Sociorum ejus, which dates from about 1320 or 1330. The translation into English verse by James Rhoades was first published in The World's Classics in 1925 and reprinted in 1934, 1947 and 1949.

TO ALL LOVERS  
OF  
SAINT FRANCIS,  
AND ESPECIALLY  
TO MY FRIEND,  
LOUIS N. PARKER,  
TO WHOM I OWE  
THE FIRST SUGGESTION  
OF THIS  
EXPERIMENT IN VERSE.

---

For friendship's sake,—not quittance of the debt  
Friend owes to friend—is this poor offering made;  
For love's due cannot save with love be met,  
Nor friendship but by friendship be repaid.

100-5111324



## AT PERUGIA

THE young moon mounts ; day fades from off the plain ;  
No colour of man's naming hath this sky.  
Thrilled with the Beatific Vision nigh,  
So passes a pure spirit without pain.  
Like billows of a never-breaking main,  
The Umbrian Apennines hang poised on high,  
Snow-crested : yonder doth Assisi lie,  
Lov'd shrine, whereof the whole world's heart is fain  
  
So there from hill to hill was wont to wend,  
And heal, and teach, and touch with living fire,  
Francis, God's Saint, six hundred years ago !  
And thou and I have six poor days to spend,  
Tread back the past, and to yon heights aspire—  
Move slow, dear earth, about the sun, move slow !

## AT ASSISI

### I

Not thus should he be sepulchred, not thus—  
A'msman of God, and spouse of Poverty—  
Where fane crowns fane, a pillared praise on high,  
By Masters of renown made glorious.  
So men of old revered him : but to us  
Strange and unmeet it seems that he should lie  
Where day by day with travel-jaded eye  
Crowds turn to gaze, and critic-tongues discuss.  
  
For pomp and splendour irked him : a bare shrine  
Rude and rock-bedded—the blue dome above—  
Sufficed his soul for worship : he did love  
To talk with birds and flowers, nor seldom trod  
Far from man's haunt the cloud-cowled Apennine,  
To be alone with God—alone with God.

### II

To stoop in self-abasement to the earth,  
Not to need happiness, to shun no pain,  
In weakness to find strength, in losses gain,  
All things in nothingness, and wealth in dearth,  
Yea, and by daily death win spirit-birth—  
The Vision of the Unseen to sight made plain—  
Saint of Assisi, though men doubt thee sane,  
This was thy wisdom, this thy glorious worth.

O Lowliness of Soul, whose inward sway  
Is Peace and Resignation, with the slow  
Sure backward-ebbing of the waves of woe,  
Henceforth and from this hour do thou, we pray,  
Sit at the heart's helm, pilot us our way,  
As from the known to the unknown we go !

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## LITTLE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS



# I

## HOW SAINT FRANCIS CONVERTED BERNARD OF ASSISI

OF Francis, glorious Saint, consider first  
How that in all his life-deeds he was made  
Conformable to Christ: for even as Christ  
Did at the outset of His ministry  
Choose twelve Apostles to spurn worldly things  
Each one, and follow Him in poverty  
And other virtues, so Saint Francis, first  
Founding his Order, chose companions twelve,  
Men dowered with deepest poverty. And as  
One of Christ's twelve Apostles, being of God  
Found reprobate, at last did hang himself,  
So of Saint Francis' twelve companions one,  
Who Brother John o' the Chapel had to name,  
Turn'd recreant, hanged himself at last. And this  
To God's Elect a great ensample is  
And matter for humility and fear,  
Considering this, that no man in God's grace  
Is certain to perséver to the end.  
And as the holy Apostles wonders were  
To all the world for sanctity, and filled  
With the Holy Spirit, even so were those  
Most holy followers of Saint Francis men  
Of such deep sanctity, that from the time

## 4 HOW SAINT FRANCIS CONVERTED

Of the Apostles until now, the world  
Ne'er held so marvellous and saintly men :  
Seeing that one of them was rapt aloft  
To the third heaven, as was Saint Paul, and this  
Was Brother Giles ; and one of them—the same  
Being Brother Philip Lungo—on his lips  
Was by an Angel touched with coal of fire,  
As was the Prophet Isaiah : one of them,  
To wit Brother Silvester, spake with God  
Like unto Moses, as friend speaks with friend :  
And one by subtlety of intellect  
E'en to the light of divine wisdom soared,  
As did that eagle, John Evangelist ;  
And this was Brother Bernard, of all hearts  
Most humble, who to its profoundest depth  
Laid bare the Holy Scripture : one of them  
Was made a Saint by God, and canonized  
In heaven, yet living in the world ; and he  
Was of Assisi, born of gentle blood,  
Brother Ruffino : and thus each and all  
Were with peculiar sanctity endowed,  
As by the sequel is made manifest.

Of the companions of Saint Francis first  
Was Brother Bernard of Assisi, who  
On this wise gat conversion. While as yet  
Saint Francis was in laic garb, albeit,  
The world e'en now despised, he went about  
The butt of all men's scorn, and in such sort  
By penance mortified, that he was deemed

A fool by many, and mocked at as one mad,  
And driven away with stones and foul despite  
Of kinfolk and of aliens, and when he  
Bore him amid all injury and contempt  
Patient the while, as he were deaf and dumb,  
Then Bernard of Assisi, being amongst  
The noblest of the city, and wealthiest,  
And wisest, of his wisdom began note  
This in Saint Francis so exceeding scorn  
O' the world, and so great patience under wrong,  
That now, albeit two years by every man  
Detested and despised, he ever seemed  
More steadfast-patient—'gan, I say, to think  
And commune with himself: 'It cannot be  
But that this Francis hath great grace of God':  
And so he bade him sup with him and lodge  
That night: whereto agreeing, Saint Francis supped  
And lodged with him. And Bernard thereupon  
Resolved in heart to watch his sanctity,  
And thereto caused prepare for him a bed  
In his own chamber, where by night a lamp  
Burned ever. And Saint Francis, to conceal  
His sanctity, so soon as he was come  
Within the chamber, threw him on the bed,  
And made a show of sleeping: and likewise  
Bernard lay down, and in a little while  
'Gan loudly snore, as if he slept full fast.  
Whereat Saint Francis, deeming that indeed  
Bernard now slept, in the first hush of night  
Rose up from off his bed, and fell to prayer,

## 6 HOW SAINT FRANCIS CONVERTED

And, raising eyes and hands aloft to heaven,  
With deepest fervour and devotion cried :  
' My God, my God ! ' continuing in these words  
Instant, with bitter tears, till dawn of day,  
Ever, and naught beside, ' My God, my God ! '  
Repeating : and these words Saint Francis spake,  
Thinking with wonder of the excellence  
Of Majesty Divine, which deigned look down  
From heaven upon a dying world, and through  
Francis, His little poor one, purposèd  
For his own soul and others to provide  
A healing of salvation. Therefore now  
Illumed by spirit of prophecy to foresee  
The mighty things which God would bring to pass  
Through him, and through his Order, and withal  
Musing of his own insufficiency  
And little worth, he cried to God in prayer  
That of His goodness and omnipotence,  
Without which human frailty nothing can,  
He would aid, supplement, accomplish that  
Which of itself availed not. Bernard then  
These gestures of Saint Francis, so devout,  
By the lamp's light beholding, and himself  
Devoutly musing on the words he spake,  
Was by the Holy Spirit touched, inspired,  
To change his life : wherefore, when dawn appeared,  
He called Saint Francis, and bespake him thus :  
' O Brother Francis, I within my heart  
Am wholly purposed to forgo the world,  
And follow thee in all that thou shalt bid.'

Saint Francis, hearing it, grew glad of soul,  
And said : ‘ Thou speak’st, O Bernard, of a thing  
So great and hard to compass, one would fain  
Seek counsel first of our Lord Jesu Christ,  
Beseeching Him make plain His will herein,  
And teach us how perform it. Let us then  
Both to the Bishop’s, where is a good priest,  
And bid say Mass, and afterward in prayer  
Continue until Tierce, entreating God  
That He, through opening of the Missal thrice,  
May point the path which He would have us choose.’  
And Bernard answered that it liked him well.  
So they at once set forward, and anon  
Came to the Bishop’s : and when now, Mass heard,  
They had in prayer been instant until Tierce,  
The priest, at bidding of Saint Francis, took  
Missal in hand, and thereto having made  
The sign o’ the Cross, anon did open it  
Thrice, in the name of Jesu Christ our Lord.  
At the first opening was revealed that word,  
Christ to the young man in the gospel spake,  
Who to perfection asked Him of the way :  
‘ Wouldst thou be perfect, go sell that thou hast,  
And give unto the poor, and follow Me.’  
At second opening was that word revealed,  
Christ spake to His Apostles, when to preach  
He sent them forth : ‘ Take nothing for the way,  
Staff, scrip, nor shoes, nor money,’ willing so  
To learn them that for bodily life they must  
In God hope wholly, have for their whole aim

## 8 HOW SAINT FRANCIS CONVERTED

To preach the blessed gospel. At the third  
Opening of missal was that word revealed  
Christ spake : ‘ If any will come after Me,  
Let him deny himself, take up his cross,  
And follow Me.’ Whereat Saint Francis said  
To Bernard : ‘ Lo ! the counsel given to us  
Of Christ ! go then, and to the uttermost  
Perform the thing which thou hast heard ; and blest  
Be our Lord Jesu Christ who hath herein  
Vouchsafed to shew us of His gospel-way.’  
And Bernard, hearing this, went forth and sold  
All that he had—and he was very rich—  
And with great joy his goods distributed  
To poor men, widows, orphans, monasteries,  
Pilgrims, and hospitals ; in all which things  
Saint Francis prudently and faithfully  
Did aid him. And a certain man by name  
Silvester, seeing Saint Francis to the poor  
Such sums of money give, or cause to give,  
Straitened with avarice to Saint Francis said :  
‘ Thou hast not fully paid me for those stones  
Which, to repair the church, thou bought’st of me :  
Now therefore that thou hast the money, pay.’  
Then marvelling at his greed, and wishing not  
To strive with him, Saint Francis, as a true  
Servant of holy gospel, thrust his hands  
In Bernard’s bosom, and with money filled,  
And in Silvester’s bosom placed it, saying  
If more he wished for, he would give him more :  
Wherewith content, Silvester turned away,

And to his house betook him : and at eve  
Thinking of that day's work, and self-accused  
For his own avarice, as of Bernard's zeal  
He pondered, and Saint Francis' sanctity,  
The following night, and other twain beside,  
He had from God a vision, and it was this :  
That from Saint Francis' mouth a cross of gold  
Issued, whose summit touched the sky, whose arms  
Stretched even from the East unto the West.  
Moved by which vision, for the love of God  
He gave away his substance, and became  
A Minor Brother, and of such sanctity  
And grace in the Order, that he spake with God,  
As one friend with another ; the which oft proved  
Saint Francis, as hereafter shall appear.  
And Bernard likewise had of God such grace,  
That to God's presence he was oft-times rapt  
In contemplation ; who, Saint Francis said,  
Was worthy of all reverence, and had been  
The founder of his Order ; seeing that he  
Had first forgone the world, reserving naught,  
But giving all unto the poor of Christ,  
And entered on the gospel-poverty,  
Presenting himself naked to the arms  
O' the Crucified ; whose name be blest by us  
For ever and for evermore. Amen.

## II

HOW SAINT FRANCIS WENT TO  
SPEAK WITH BROTHER BERNARD

THE most devout thrall of the Crucified,  
Saint Francis, had through penances severe,  
And ceaseless weeping, become wellnigh blind,  
And saw but little. Amongst other times  
Once it befell that he from where he lodged  
Set forth, and journeyed to a certain place  
Where Brother Bernard was, to talk with him  
Of things divine. And, coming to the place,  
He found he was at prayer within the wood,  
Wholly uplifted and joined fast to God.  
Thereat Saint Francis went into the wood  
And called him : ‘ Come and speak to this blind man.’  
And Brother Bernard answered him no word,  
For being a man of contemplation deep,  
His mind was rapt from earth to God in heaven.  
And since he had rare grace to speak of God,  
As erst Saint Francis many a time had proved,  
He longed the more to talk with him. Anon,  
After some little space, a second time  
He called him, and a third, the selfsame way ;  
And neither time did Brother Bernard hear,  
And therefore answered not, nor came to him :  
Whereat Saint Francis, half disconsolate,  
Marvelled and left him, chafing inwardly,

## TO SPEAK WITH BROTHER BERNARD 11

That Brother Bernard, though he called him thrice,  
Had come not : and, departing with this thought,  
Saint Francis, now some little way withdrawn,  
To his companion said : ‘ Await me here,’  
And gat him to a lonely place hard by,  
And fell to prayer, beseeching God reveal  
Why Brother Bernard had not answered him.  
And, as he prayed, there came a voice from God,  
Which spake on this wise : ‘ O poor little man,  
Why art thou troubled ? Should a mortal leave  
God for the creature ? Lo ! fast-joined to Me  
Was Brother Bernard, when thou called’st him,  
And could not therefore come, nor answer thee :  
Then marvel not he could not answer, seeing  
He was so far transported from himself,  
That of those words of thine he heard not one.’  
Saint Francis, having this reply from God,  
**To** Brother Bernard with all haste returned,  
In lowly self-arraignment to confess  
The thought he had toward him : whom so soon  
As he saw coming, Brother Bernard went  
To meet him, and fell prostrate at his feet :  
Whereat Saint Francis, bidding him arise,  
Told him full meekly of the thought he had,  
And fret of heart to-him-ward, and how God  
Had answered him therein ; and ended thus :  
‘ By holy Obedience I command thee do  
What I shall bid thee.’ Brother Bernard then  
Fearing Saint Francis, as was oft his wont,  
Some act extravagant should impose on him,

Would fain, so might he without fault, have shunned  
The said Obedience—therefore answered thus:  
' I thine Obedience am content to do,  
So thou wilt promise to do mine.' And when  
Saint Francis promised, Brother Bernard said,  
' What is it, Father, thou wouldest have me do ? '  
Then spake Saint Francis : ' I require of thee  
By holy Obedience, as the punishment  
Of this my pride and arrogance of heart,  
When I have cast me backward on the ground  
Plant one foot on my neck, one on my mouth,  
And thus from side to side pass over me  
Three times, with words of contumely and scorn,  
Saying in chief : " Lie there, thou base-born son  
Of Peter Bernardone ! Whence to thee  
Cometh such insolence that art so vile  
A creature ? " ' Brother Bernard hearing this,  
Albeit full loth to do him that despite,  
Yet for the sake of holy Obedience,  
With what best courtesy he could, fulfilled  
The charge Saint Francis gave him : and, this done,  
' Now,' quoth Saint Francis, ' lay on me the task  
Which thou requirest of me, seeing that I  
Have promised to obey thee.' Whereupon  
Quoth Brother Bernard : ' I require of thee  
By holy Obedience, whensoe'er we meet,  
Thou chide and rate me harshly for my faults.'  
At the which word Saint Francis marvelled sore,  
For such was Brother Bernard's sanctity,  
That him in utmost reverence he held,

## TO SPEAK WITH BROTHER BERNARD 13

Nor worthy deemed of blame in anything.  
Wherefore it came to pass, from that time forth,  
Saint Francis for the said Obedience' sake  
Shunned to be much with him, that word of blame  
Might ne'er by him be spoken against one  
He knew to be of such high saintliness.  
But when he wished to see him, or to hear  
Discourse of God, he with what speed he might  
Would leave him and be gone. It was a thing  
Right worshipful to witness with what love,  
Meekness, and reverence, both of word and deed,  
Saint Francis, holy Father, did entreat  
His first-born, Brother Bernard.

To the laud  
And glory of Christ Jesu, and withal  
Of Francis, His poor little one. Amen.

## III

## HOW BROTHER ELIAS WAS QUESTIONED BY AN ANGEL AND ANSWERED PROUDLY

IN the beginning, and at the Order's birth,  
When were few Brothers, and as yet they had  
No settled habitations, it befell  
That once Saint Francis, on devotion bent,  
Bound for Galicia and Saint James's shrine,  
Took with him certain Brothers, of whom one  
Was Brother Bernard. And, as thus they fared  
Along the road together, so it was  
That, coming to a certain place, he found  
A poor sick man, for whom with pity moved,  
He said to Brother Bernard : ' Son, I will  
That here thou tarry, this sick man to tend.'  
And Brother Bernard, meekly kneeling, bowed  
His head, and from the holy Father's lips  
Received the said Obedience, and there stayed :  
And with the rest Saint Francis journeyed on  
Toward Saint James's. And, arriving there,  
As night-long in the church Saint Francis prayed  
It was of God revealed to him that he  
Of many a place throughout the world must win  
Possession, seeing his Order was to spread  
And swell into a mighty multitude  
Of Brethren : by which revelation led,

Saint Francis straightway 'gan possession win  
Of places in those regions, and at length,  
By the same way returning whence he came,  
Found Brother Bernard there, and the sick man,  
With whom he had left him, perfectly made whole.  
Wherefore Saint Francis did permission give  
To Brother Bernard the next year to go  
Unto Saint James's. And, with that, returned  
Saint Francis to Spoleto's vale, and there  
In a lone place he sojourned, and with him  
Brother Masseo, Brother Elias too,  
And certain others, the which one and all  
Gave right good heed to hinder not, nor let,  
Saint Francis from his praying: and this they did  
For the great reverence which they bore to him,  
And knowing that God would oft, the while he prayed,  
Shew him of mighty matters. And one day,  
Saint Francis being at prayer within the wood,  
Behold ! a fair youth, as for travel dight,  
Came to the House-door, and so hotly knocked,  
And long, and loudly, that the Brethren all  
At such unwonted knocking were amazed.  
Went Brother Masseo and undid the door,  
And to the youth said: ' Whence art thou, my son ?  
Methinks that never wert thou here till now,  
To knock so strangely.' And the youth replied:  
' How should one knock, then ? ' Brother Masseo said:  
' Knock thrice, with pauses between knock and knock,  
Then tarry till the Brother shall have time,  
A Paternoster said, to come to thee :

And, if by then he come not, knock once more.'  
And the youth answered : ' In sore haste am I,  
And therefore knock so loudly, being bound  
On a long journey: and I hither came  
To speak with Brother Francis, but he stays  
Within the wood, in contemplation wrapt,  
And I were loth molest him. But go tell  
Brother Elias I would put to him  
A question, for I hear he is full wise.'  
So Brother Masseo did the message bear  
That Brother Elias to that youth should go ;  
But go he would not, being wroth thereat.  
Then Brother Masseo wist not what to do,  
Nor how to answer him : since, if he said  
That Brother Elias could not come, he lied ;  
If, that for wrath he would not, he feared set  
An ill ensample. And, as now so long  
Brother Masseo lingered his return,  
The youth once more 'gan knocking, as at first :  
And Brother Masseo to the door returned  
After a little stay, and said to him :  
' Thou hast not in thy knocking heeded that  
I taught thee.' And the youth thereto replied :  
' Brother Elias will not come to me :  
Go then, tell Brother Francis that I came  
To speak with him, but seeing that I were loth  
Break in upon his prayer, bid him instead  
Send Brother Elias to me.' Thereupon  
Went Brother Masseo to Saint Francis, who  
Was praying in the wood with face upturned

To heaven, and told him the youth's errand, all,  
And Brother Elias' answer. Now that youth  
God's Angel was in human form. Thereat  
Saint Francis, neither moving from his place  
Nor letting droop his countenance the while,  
Replied to Brother Masseo : ' Hie thee back,  
Bid Brother Elias, for Obedience' sake,  
Go to that youth and tarry not.' And when  
He heard Saint Francis' bidding, to the door  
Strode Brother Elias, mightily incensed,  
And, with great force and bluster opening it,  
Said to the youth : ' What wilt thou ? ' He replied :  
' Brother, take heed thou be not stirred to wrath,  
As now thou seemest, seeing that anger snares  
The soul, nor suffers it discern the truth.'  
Said Brother Elias : ' Tell me what thou wouldest  
With me.' Replied the youth : ' I ask of thee  
If it be lawful for the followers  
Of Holy Gospel of such things to eat  
As shall be set before them, even as Christ  
Bade His Disciples : and I further ask  
If any man have right to lay on them  
Aught that impugns the gospel liberty.'  
And Brother Elias haughtily replied :  
' This I know well, but will not answer thee :  
Get thee about thy business ! ' Said the youth :  
' I should know better how to answer this  
Than thou.' Then Brother Elias waxed full wroth,  
And shut the door with fury, and was gone.  
Anon of the said question he began

To ponder, and have doubts within himself,  
And knew not how to solve it ; seeing that he,  
As Vicar of the order, had laid down  
And stablished as an ordinance—thereby  
Out-gospelling the gospel, and the Rule  
Out-ruling of Saint Francis—that within  
The Order should no Brother taste of flesh ;  
So that that question was full-aimed at him.  
Wherefore, not knowing how to clear himself,  
And weighing the youth's modesty, and how  
He said he could a better answer give  
Than that himself had given, back to the door  
He turned, and opened it, to ask the youth  
Of the aforesaid question : but behold !  
He was already gone, because the pride  
Of Brother Elias all unworthy was  
To parley with the Angel. And, this done,  
Saint Francis, to whom everything had been  
Revealed of God, from out the wood returned,  
And loudly with uplifted voice rebuked  
Brother Elias, saying : ‘Thou dost ill,  
Proud Brother Elias, to drive hence from us  
The holy Angels, who come hitherward  
For our admonishment. I say to thee  
That I fear greatly lest that pride of thine  
Should from this Order oust thee at the last.’  
And, as Saint Francis thus foretold to him,  
So it befell thereafter, for he died  
Outside the Order.

On the selfsame day,

And at that hour whenas the Angel thence  
Departed, in like semblance he appeared  
To Brother Bernard from Saint James's shrine  
Returning, and now standing on the brink  
Of a great river, and saluted him  
In his own tongue, and said : ‘ God give thee peace,  
Good Brother ! ’ And Brother Bernard marvelling,  
And musing on the beauty of the youth,  
And his own native accent, and withal  
The peaceful greeting, and glad countenance,  
Inquired of him : ‘ Good youth, whence comest  
thou ? ’

The Angel answered : ‘ From yon place I come  
Wherein Saint Francis sojourns ; and I went  
To speak with him, and could not, seeing that he  
Was musing in the wood on things divine,  
And I would not molest him. In that place  
Dwells Brother Masseo too, and Brother Giles,  
And Brother Elias : yea, and I was taught  
Of Brother Masseo at the door to knock,  
As do the Brothers : but to my questioning  
Would Brother Elias yield me no reply  
Whereof thereafter he repented him,  
And would have seen and hearkened unto me,  
But could not.’ After this, the Angel said  
To Brother Bernard : ‘ Wherefore dost thou not  
Cross over ? ’ Brother Bernard answered him :  
‘ Because I fear the danger, for the depth  
Of water that I see.’ The Angel said :  
‘ Cross we together, and have thou no doubt ! ’

Therewith he took his hand, and planted him,  
Even in an eye-wink, on the further side.  
Then Brother Bernard knew it was indeed  
God's Angel, and in reverence and deep joy  
Cried with uplifted voice : ' O blessed One,  
Angel of God, make known to me thy name ! '  
The Angel answered : ' Wherefore askest thou  
My name, the which is Wonderful ? ' And when  
He had so said, the Angel disappeared,  
Leaving him greatly solaced, in so much  
That all that road he travelled with good cheer,  
Still musing of the day and hour, wherein  
The Angel had appeared to him. And so  
Arriving where Saint Francis at that time  
With his companions, as aforesaid, dwelt,  
He told them, all in order, everything :  
Then knew they surely that to them and him  
The selfsame Angel had that day and hour  
Appeared : and they gave thanks to God. Amen.

IV

HOW BROTHER BERNARD WAS SENT  
TO BOLOGNA

SEEING that Saint Francis and his fellowship  
Were called of God and chosen in heart and deed  
To bear the Cross of Christ, and preach the same,  
So both in outward garb and austere life,  
So in the deeds and labours of their hands,  
They seemed to be, and were, men crucified :  
And therefore would they rather suffer shame  
And insult for Christ's love, than of the world  
Win reverence, or men's worship and renown.  
Nay, wrongs rejoiced them, honours made them sad ;  
So, wending through the world as pilgrim-folk  
And strangers, they bare naught about with them,  
Saving Christ crucified : and seeing they were  
True branches of the true Vine, which is Christ,  
Great fruit of souls and goodly brought they forth,  
The which for God they won.

It came to pass  
That Brother Bernard, when the Rule began,  
Was by Saint Francis to Bologna sent,  
That there, according to the grace vouchsafed  
Of God to him, he might bear fruit to God :  
Whereat for holy Obedience he set forth,  
Making the sign of the most holy Cross,  
And to Bologna came. And, seeing him clad

In vile and uncouth garb, the children there  
Did him foul scorn and manifold despite,  
As though he were a fool: and patiently  
Would Brother Bernard, and with cheerfulness,  
Bear every torment for the love of Christ :  
Nay, that he might be mocked of them the more,  
He of set purpose to the city-square  
Betook him, so that many, as there he sat,  
Flocking about him, boys alike and men,  
Some from behind, and others from before,  
Plucked at his hood ; and some threw dust at him,  
Some stones, some pushed him this way, and some that.  
But Brother Bernard, ever of one mien,  
And patient ever, with joyful countenance,  
Nor chafed thereat, nor changed ; and many a day  
Thither returned he, the like things to bear.  
And seeing that patience is perfection's work,  
And warranty of virtue, a wise man  
And learnèd of the law—when he beheld  
And marked such virtue and such constancy  
In Brother Bernard, as that all those days  
Nor insult, nor despite, could anger him—  
Said to his own heart : ‘ Verily this needs  
Must be a holy man ! ’ And, coming up,  
He asked : ‘ Who art thou, and what brings thee  
here ? ’  
And brother Bernard, for reply thereto,  
Thrust hand in bosom, and plucking forth the Rule  
Writ by Saint Francis, gave it him to read :  
Who, having read it, and considered well

The high perfection of its excellence,  
In utmost wonder and amazement turned  
And said to his companions : ‘ Of a truth,  
This of religion is the loftiest state  
That e’er I heard of : therefore too this man  
And his companions are, of all this world,  
The holiest : and, who wrongs him, sorely sins :  
Whom rather in high honour should we hold,  
Seeing that he is a true friend of God.’  
To Brother Bernard turned he then, and said :  
‘ Would ye possess you of a House, wherein  
To serve God fitly, this with right good will  
I for my soul’s salvation will bestow.’  
And Brother Bernard answered him : ‘ Good Sir,  
Methinks this word into thy heart was breathed  
By our Lord Jesu Christ : and therefore I  
Right willingly accept the proffered gift,  
Unto Christ’s honour.’ The said lawyer then  
To his own home with gladness, lovingly,  
Brought Brother Bernard, and the promised House  
Gave him, and made all ready, and garnished it  
At his own charges, and thenceforth became  
The father and chief champion both of him  
And his companions. Brother Bernard too  
Now by his holy walk began to earn  
Much honour of the people, so that he,  
Who did but win to touch or look on him,  
Deemed himself blessed : but himself the while,  
True, meek disciple as he was, of Christ  
And of the lowly Francis, grown afraid

## 24 HOW BERNARD WAS SENT TO BOLOGNA

Lest the world's honour his soul's peace and health  
Should hinder, on a day departing thence  
Returned unto Saint Francis, and said thus :  
' Father, the House is ready to our need  
Within Bologna's city, and do thou  
Send Brothers to maintain it and there stay :  
Since I no more could profit me therein ;  
Nay, for the too much honour done to me,  
My loss, I fear, was greater than my gain.'  
Thereat Saint Francis, hearing everything  
In order, even as God had brought to pass  
Through Brother Bernard, rendered thanks to God—  
Who now in such wise 'gan to spread afar  
The little poor ones of the Cross—and then  
Of his companions to Bologna sent  
And Lombardy, the which in divers parts  
Did many Houses of the Order found.  
To the good Jesu's honour and praise. Amen.

## V

CONCERNING THE BLESSED DEATH  
OF BROTHER BERNARD

SUCH sanctity in Brother Bernard was,  
That him Saint Francis in high reverence held,  
And many a time would praise him. On a day,  
Saint Francis being upon devotion bent  
And praying, it was revealed to him of God  
That Brother Bernard by divine consent  
Must many a shrewd assault of demons bear.  
Whereat Saint Francis, having tender ruth  
For the said Brother Bernard, whom he loved  
As his own son, for many a day with tears  
Made supplication unto God for him,  
Commending him to Jesu Christ, that He  
Would grant him victory o'er the Evil One.  
And, as Saint Francis thus devoutly prayed,  
One day God answered : ‘ Francis, fear thou not,  
For all the assaults, that must encountered be  
By Brother Bernard, are of God allowed,  
To prove his virtue, and to crown his worth :  
And over all his enemies at the last  
Shall he have victory, seeing that he is one  
Of the guest-fellows of the realm of God.’  
At which reply Saint Francis had great joy,  
And gave God thanks, and from that hour in love  
And reverence held him ever more and more ;

## 26 CONCERNING THE BLESSED DEATH

Nor only in his life shewed forth the same,  
But in death also ; for, as death drew nigh,  
Saint Francis, like the holy Patriarch  
Jacob, inquired of his devoted sons,  
Who sorrowed round him, and with many tears  
Wept for the passing of so loved a sire,  
'Where is my first-born ? Come to me, my son,  
Come that my soul may bless thee, ere I die.'  
Thereat spake Brother Bernard privily  
To Brother Elias, who was at that time  
The Vicar of the Order : ' Father, go,  
That he may bless thee, to the Saint's right  
hand ' :

And Brother Elias to his right hand went :  
And lo ! Saint Francis, who with eyes o'er-wept  
Had lost his vision, placing his right hand  
On Brother Elias, answered : ' This is not  
The head of Brother Bernard, my first-born.'  
Then Brother Bernard to his left hand went,  
Whereat Saint Francis, with arms cross-wise held,  
Placed his right hand on Brother Bernard's head,  
His left on Brother Elias, and thus spake  
To Brother Bernard : ' O my son, may God,  
The Father of our Lord Jesu Christ, vouchsafe  
With all celestial blessings of the soul  
In Christ to bless thee ! even as thou art  
The first-born in this holy Order, chosen  
To yield ensample of the Gospel-life,  
And follow Christ in gospel poverty ;  
Since not alone thou gavest what was thine,

And didst among the poor distribute it  
Wholly and freely for Christ's love, but eke  
Within this Order offeredst God thyself,  
A sacrifice of sweetness. Be thou then  
Both of our Lord Christ Jesu and of me,  
Poor little one, His servant, from henceforth  
With everlasting benediction blest,  
Going and staying, waking and asleep,  
Living and dying: whoso blesseth thee  
Be filled with blessings, as who curseth thee  
Shall rest not without punishment. Be thou  
Chief of thy Brethren, and to thy command  
Let all the Brothers bow: have thou full power  
To take into this Order whom thou wilt:  
No Brother have lordship over thee: be free  
Of thy good pleasure to depart or stay.'

After Saint Francis' death the Brethren loved  
And reverenced Brother Bernard, as indeed  
An honoured Father: and, when near his end,  
To him from divers regions of the world  
Came many Brethren, and amongst them came  
The holy and angelic Brother Giles;  
Who soon as Brother Bernard he beheld  
With right good cheer cried: 'Sursum corda.' Then  
Gave holy Brother Bernard secret charge  
That one of the Brothers should for Brother Giles  
Prepare a place for meditation meet:  
And it was done. And Brother Bernard, now  
Being at point to die, bade raise him up,  
And to the Brethren, who before him stood,

## 28 THE DEATH OF BROTHER BERNARD

Spake upon this wise : ‘ Brothers well-beloved,  
I will not speak to you in many words.  
But ye must bear in mind that yours is still  
The state religious which erewhile was mine ;  
And that which I have now, ye too shall have  
Hereafter. Further in my soul I find  
That for a thousand worlds like unto this  
I would not choose to have served other Lord  
Than our Lord Jesu Christ. For all faults done  
I do accuse me and confess the same  
Unto my Saviour Jesu, and to you,  
And I beseech you, Brothers mine most dear,  
Have love for one another.’ And these words  
Ended, with other admonitions good,  
He laid him back upon the bed, and lo !  
His face grew radiant with a wondrous joy,  
So that the Brethren greatly marvelled all :  
And in that joyfulness, with glory crowned,  
His saintly spirit from this present life  
To the blest life of angels passed away.  
Unto the glory and the praise of Christ.

## VI

HOW SAINT FRANCIS KEPT LENT  
ON AN ISLAND OF THE LAKE  
OF PERUGIA

THE holy Francis, honoured thrall of Christ,  
Being in certain matters, as it were,  
Another Christ, vouchsafed unto the world  
For men's salvation, 'twas the will of God  
The Father to conform in many acts  
And fashion him to the similitude  
Of His dear Son, Christ Jesu ; as was seen  
Both in the venerable fellowship  
Of twelve companions, and that miracle,  
The mystery of the blessed Stigmata,  
And in the unbroken fast of holy Lent,  
The which he kept on this wise.

Being once

Nigh to Perugia's lake upon the day  
Of Carnival in a disciple's house  
Who loved him, and with whom he had lodged the  
night,  
Saint Francis was of God inspired to go  
Unto an island of the aforesaid lake,  
That Lent to keep : whereat Saint Francis prayed  
This fond disciple for the love of Christ  
To bear him over in his little boat  
To a lake-island wherein no man dwelt,

## 30 HOW SAINT FRANCIS KEPT LENT

And this to do upon Ash-Wednesday night,  
That none might note him. He, for the deep love  
He had toward Saint Francis, readily  
Performed the thing he asked, and bare him o'er  
To the said island. And Saint Francis took  
But two small loaves with him. And when they  
touched  
The island, and his friend, at point to part,  
Was turning home, Saint Francis by his love  
Prayed him tell no man wherefore he was there,  
Nor, save on Holy Thursday, come himself  
To seek him : so the other from his side  
Was parted, and Saint Francis left alone.  
And since there was no dwelling whereunto  
He might betake him, a thick wooded holt  
He entered, the which many thorns and shrubs  
Had shaped to semblance of a little hut  
Or cave, and therein gat himself to prayer  
And meditation upon heavenly things.  
And there all Lent remained he, eating not  
Nor drinking, save of one of those small loaves  
The half, as witnessed his disciple, when  
On Holy Thursday he returned to him,  
And found, of the two loaves, yet whole the one  
And halved the other : and the one half ate  
Saint Francis out of reverence for the fast,  
As folk believe, of Christ the Blessèd One,  
Who fasted forty days and forty nights,  
Not tasting even of material food :  
And so with that half-loaf he chased from him

The venom of vainglory, and by Christ's  
Ensample forty days and forty nights  
Fasted : and in the place, thereafter, where  
Saint Francis had this wondrous abstinence  
Enacted, many a miracle did God  
Work through his merits ; for the which thing's sake  
Folk 'gan to build them houses, and there dwell ;  
And in brief space arose a hamlet large  
And goodly, and there, too, the Brothers' House,  
' House of the Island ' hight ; and still the men  
And women of that hamlet hold the place  
In love and awe, where kept the aforesaid Lent  
Saint Francis.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## VII

OF PATIENCE WHICH IS PERFECT  
JOY

ONCE, as Saint Francis to Saint Mary's shrine,  
Named of the Angels, from Perugia went  
With Brother Leo in the time of Spring,  
Pinched shrewdly by the exceeding bitter cold,  
He cried to Brother Leo, who strode before  
A little, and said to him : ' O Brother Leo,  
Albeit the Brothers Minor in all lands  
Give great ensamples of life-holiness  
And godly edifying, do thou write  
Nathless, and diligently give heed hereto,  
That therein is not perfect joy.' Anon,  
The second time, now further on his way,  
' O Brother Leo,' Saint Francis cried, ' albeit  
A Minor Brother to blind eyes give sight,  
Straighten the crooked limb, cast devils out,  
Make the deaf hear, and the lame man to walk,  
Yea, to the dumb give speech, and—which is yet  
A greater thing—raise up the four-days-dead,  
Write thou that herein is not perfect joy.'  
And, going a little way, he loudly cried :  
' Albeit the Minor Brother knew all tongues,  
O Brother Leo, and all sciences,  
Yea, and all scriptures, so that he had skill  
To prophesy, nor only bring to light

Things future, but the secrets of the heart  
 And conscience, write : " Not here is perfect joy." "  
 And yet again, a little further on,  
 Saint Francis loudly called to him, and said :  
 ' O Brother Leo, little sheep of God,  
 Albeit the Minor Brother speak with tongue  
 Of angels, and the courses of the stars,  
 And hidden virtues of the herbs, should know,  
 And all earth's treasures were revealed to him,  
 And though he understood of birds and fish  
 And of all beasts the virtues, and of men,  
 And trees, and rocks, and roots, and water—write  
 That not herein is perfect joy.' And yet  
 A little further onward, with loud voice  
 Saint Francis cried : ' O Brother Leo, albeit  
 The Minor Brother wist so well to preach,  
 That to Christ's faith all heathendom he win,  
 Write thou that herein is not perfect joy.'  
 And, for two miles the fashion of his speech  
 Continuing thus, much marvelling, at length  
 Spake Brother Leo and inquired of him :  
 ' Father, I pray thee in the name of God  
 Make known to me wherein is perfect joy.'  
 And thus Saint Francis answered him : ' When we  
 Shall to Saint Mary of the Angels come,  
 Soaked thus with rain, and frozen with the cold,  
 And mud-bespattered and with hunger spent,  
 Knock at the House-door, and the porter comes  
 In wrath, and asks : " Who are ye ? " and we say :  
 " Two of your Brethren we," and he replies :

" Nay, but ye say not sooth, two rogues ye are  
Who go about cozening the world, to rob  
The poor man of his alms ; away with you ! "

Nor will not open to us, and makes us stand  
Out in the rain and snow, hungry and cold,  
Even until nightfall ; then, if all these wrongs,  
And all this cruelty, and these rude rebuffs,  
We shall in patience, without soreness, bear,  
And murmur not against him, and shall think  
With charity and meekness that indeed  
The porter knows us, and was moved by God  
To our abuse ; O Brother Leo, write  
That herein there is perfect joy. And if  
We still continue knocking, and he comes forth  
Outrageous, and with insults and with blows  
Drives us away, as knaves importunate,  
Saying : " Go, get ye hence, vile pilferers !  
Off to the hospital, since here shall be  
Nor bed, nor bite for ye ! " if this we bear  
With patience, cheerfulness, and love, herein,  
O Brother Leo, write, is perfect joy.  
And if, with cold and hunger and the night  
Sore pressed, yet knock and call we, praying him  
With loud plaints, for the love of God, to ope  
And let us in, and he, the more enraged,  
Shall say : " Lo ! these be knaves importunate ;  
Now will I pay them that they have deserved,"  
And with a knotty staff shall issue forth,  
And hale us by the hood, and fling to earth,  
And roll us in the snow, and with that staff

Belabour, knot by knot—if all these things  
We shall with patience joyfully endure,  
Weighing the sufferings of the blessed Christ,  
The which for His love's sake we ought to bear—  
Here and herein, O Brother Leo, write  
Is perfect joy. Now mark the end hereof :  
Above all things, all graces, Brother Leo,  
And gifts of the Holy Spirit, the which Christ  
Vouchsafeth to His friends, is over self  
To triumph, and for Christ's sake willingly  
Bear pains, reproaches, injuries, and want ;  
Seeing that in all the other gifts of God  
Glory we may not, being not ours, but God's :  
For which cause saith the Apostle : “ What hast thou  
Which thou hadst not of God ? And, if of Him  
Thou hadst it, wherefore glory, even as though  
Thou hadst it of thyself ? ” But in the cross  
Of tribulation and of suffering boast  
We may, since that is ours : and for this cause  
The Apostle saith : “ I have no will to boast,  
Save in the Cross of Jesu Christ our Lord.” ’  
To whom be endless honour and renown  
For ever and for evermore. Amen.

## VIII

HOW SAINT FRANCIS AND BROTHER  
LEO SAID MATINS WITHOUT A  
BREVIARY

IT chanced, whenas the Order yet was young,  
 Saint Francis lodged within a certain House  
 With Brother Leo, where no book they had  
 To say the Holy Office : and when now  
 The hour of matins came, Saint Francis spake  
 To Brother Leo : ‘ We lack breviary,  
 Dear Son, wherewith the Matin-song to say :  
 But, that our time in praising God be spent,  
 Lo ! I will speak, and thou shalt make reply,  
 As I shall teach thee ; and look well that thou  
 Answer not otherwise, nor change the words  
 I teach. “ O Brother Francis,” I shall say,  
 “ Such evils hast thou wrought, such heinous sins,  
 While in the world, that thou deservest hell ” :  
 And, Brother Leo, thou shalt make reply :  
 “ True is it thou hast earned hell’s lowest depth.” ’  
 Said Brother Leo, simple as a dove,  
 ‘ Willingly, Father, in God’s name begin.’  
 Thereat Saint Francis ’gan to say : ‘ Such ills,  
 O Brother Francis, in the world thou’st wrought,  
 And sins so many, that thou deservest hell.’  
 ‘ God ’, replied Brother Leo, ‘ through thee will work  
 Such weal, that thou shalt go to Paradise.’

## SAID MATINS WITHOUT A BREVIARY 37

‘ Nay, Brother Leo, not thus,’ Saint Francis said,  
‘ Art thou to answer : but when I shall say,  
“ O Brother Francis, against God thou’st wrought  
Iniquities so many, that thou deserv’st  
To be accus’d of God,” say, “ Verily  
Among the accursèd thou deserv’st to be.” ’  
And Brother Leo made answer, ‘ Willingly,  
My Father.’ Then with many tears, and sighs,  
And beatings of the breast, with loud voice spake  
Saint Francis : ‘ O my Lord of heaven and earth,  
Against Thee I have wrought so many wrongs,  
And sins so many, I well deserve of Thee  
To be accus’d.’ And Brother Leo replied :  
‘ So, Brother Francis, shall God deal with thee,  
That thou among the blessed shalt be blest  
Supremely.’ And Saint Francis, marvelling  
That Brother Leo made answers opposite  
To that he had enjoined, rebuked him, saying :  
‘ Why, as I teach thee, answerest thou not ?  
By holy Obedience, I command that thou  
Make answer, as I bid thee : I shall say :  
“ O Brother Francis, miserable wight,  
Thinkest thou God will mercy shew to thee,  
Seeing so oft thou hast trespassed against Him,  
Who is the Father of mercies, and therewith  
God of all consolation, that thou art  
Unworthy to find mercy ? ” Whereunto  
Thou, Brother Leo, little lamb, shalt say :  
“ Mercy to find no whit art worthy thou.” ’  
But afterward, whenas Saint Francis said :

‘ O Brother Francis, miserable wight,’  
 With the like words that followed, thus to him  
 Made answer Brother Leo : ‘ My Father, God,  
 Whose mercy than thy sin is vaster far,  
 Will shew thee plenteous mercy, and thereto  
 Add many graces.’ Upon which reply  
 Sweetly indignant, patiently distressed,  
 Saint Francis thus to Brother Leo spoke :  
 ‘ Why ’gainst Obedience hast thou thus presumed,  
 And now so oft made answers opposite  
 Of that which I enjoined thee ? ’ ‘ Nay, God  
     knows,  
 Father,’ with reverence and humility  
 Quoth Brother Leo, ‘ that each time I fixed  
 Within my heart to answer as thou bad’st,  
 But God hath made me speak as pleaseth Him,  
 Not as me pleaseth.’ Whereat marvelling,  
 To Brother Leo Saint Francis spake and said :  
 ‘ Right lovingly I pray thee that this time  
 Thou answer as I told thee.’ ‘ In God’s name  
 Speak,’ replied Brother Leo, ‘ for verily  
 Will I this time make answer as thou wilt.’  
 Then spake with tears Saint Francis : ‘ Dost thou  
     think,  
 O Brother Francis, miserable wight,  
 God will to thee shew mercy ? ’—and the rest.  
 ‘ Yea,’ replied Brother Leo, ‘ plenteous grace  
 Shalt thou receive of God, who will exalt  
 And glorify thee even for evermore :  
 For who himself doth humble, he shall be

SAID MATINS WITHOUT A BREVIARY 39

Exalted ; and none other can I say,  
For by my mouth God speaketh.' On this wise  
In lowly striving, amid many tears,  
And with much ghostly solace, until dawn  
They kept their vigil.

To the praise of Christ.

## IX

HOW BROTHER MASSEO MADE  
PROOF OF SAINT FRANCIS

WHEN in the House of Portiuncula  
Saint Francis once with Brother Masseo lodged  
Of Marignano—a right saintly man,  
Discreet withal, and graced to speak of God,  
For which thing's sake Saint Francis loved him much—  
One day Saint Francis from the wood and prayer  
Returning, and e'en now at the wood's mouth,  
The said Brother Masseo would make proof  
Of his humility, and to meet him went,  
And, as in mockery, said : ‘ Why after thee ?  
Why after thee ? Why after thee ? ’ Replied  
Saint Francis : ‘ What is that which thou wouldest  
say ? ’

Quoth Brother Masseo : ‘ Why doth the whole world  
Run after thee, I say, and all so crave  
To see, hear, and obey thee ? Thou art not  
Comely of form, thou art not greatly learn'd,  
Noble thou art not: whence then cometh it  
That the whole world runs after thee ? ’ This word  
Saint Francis hearing waxed right glad of soul,  
And, raising face to heaven, a great while stood  
With mind in God uplifted, and anon,  
Came to himself again, knelt down, and gave  
Glory and thanks to God, and afterward

With utmost fervour of spirit turned once more  
To Brother Masseo, and said to him : ‘ Wouldst know  
Why after me ? Why after me wouldst know,  
Wouldst know why after me the whole world runs ?  
This have I from the eyes of most high God,  
The which in every place behold both good  
And guilty : wherefore those most holy eyes  
Have among sinners beheld none more vile,  
More helpless, or more sinful, than am I :  
So that, to do that wondrous work the which  
He purposeth to do, He hath not found  
On earth a viler creature ; for which cause  
Me hath He chosen to tread under foot  
The nobleness, the greatness, and the strength,  
The beauty, and the wisdom of the world :  
So men may know that every grace and good  
Cometh of Him, not of the creature, yea,  
And that no flesh may glory in His sight,  
But who would glory, glory in the Lord,  
To whom is glory and honour without end.’  
Then Brother Masseo, at this meek response,  
Spoke with such fervour, was afeard, and wist  
How that Saint Francis stood firm-based on true  
Humility.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## X

HOW SAINT FRANCIS MADE BROTHER  
MASSEO TO TURN ROUND

ONE day, Saint Francis walking by the way  
With Brother Masseo, as it chanced, the said  
Brother Masseo walked some steps before :  
And coming to a cross-way, from the which  
One might to Florence, or Siena wend,  
Or to Arezzo, Brother Masseo said :  
‘ Father, by which way must we go ? ’ Replied  
Saint Francis : ‘ By the way which God shall will.’  
Said Brother Masseo : ‘ How are we to know  
God’s will ? ’ Replied Saint Francis : ‘ By the sign  
Which I shall show thee : wherefore I command,  
As holy Obedience doth require of thee,  
That in the cross-way where thy feet are set  
Thou turn thee round and round, as children do,  
Nor stay thy turning till I speak the word.’  
Then Brother Masseo ’gan to turn him round,  
And turned so often, that through dizziness  
Of brain, the which such turning wont to breed,  
He fell to earth full many a time : but since  
No word of resting did Saint Francis speak,  
And he would fain obey him faithfully,  
Each time arose he, and ’gan turn again.  
At last, while he was bravely turning still,  
Saint Francis said : ‘ Stand fast, and move not’ : so

He stood : whereat Saint Francis asked of him :  
‘ Toward what quarter is thy face now set ? ’  
And Brother Masseo said : ‘ Siena-ward.’  
Saint Francis answered : ‘ That then is the way  
Which God would have us go.’ And as they went  
Along that way, sore marvelled to himself  
Brother Masseo, that Saint Francis thus  
Had made him act as though he were a child,  
Before the lay-folk who were passing by :  
Nathless for reverence durst he say no word  
Unto the holy Father. As they drew  
Nigh to Siena, lo ! the city-folk  
Of the Saint’s coming heard, and gat them out  
To meet him, and devoutly bare him on,  
With his companion, to the bishop’s house,  
So that the ground ne’er touched they with their feet.  
At that time certain of the folk had strife  
Together, and already twain were dead.  
And, thither come, Saint Francis preached to them  
Words so devout and holy, that they all  
To peace and perfect amity were brought,  
And concord each with other. For which cause  
The Bishop of Siena, when he heard  
What holy deed Saint Francis had performed,  
Bade to his house, and entertained him there  
With utmost honour, both that day and night.  
And the next morn Saint Francis, who in sooth  
Being right humble sought in all he did  
Naught but God’s glory, gat him up betimes  
With his companion, and departed thence,

Nor knew the bishop aught thereof. Whereat  
Brother Masseo went along the way  
With inward murmurs, saying: ‘What is this  
That this good man hath done? Me like a child  
He made spin round, and to the bishop, who  
Such honour paid him, gave he no good word,  
Nor did with thanks requite him’: and herein  
To Brother Masseo did Saint Francis seem  
To have borne him indiscreetly. But anon  
By heavenly inspiration to himself  
Once more returning, of himself rebuked,  
With his own heart he spake: ‘Thou art too proud,  
Brother Masseo, in that thou dost judge  
Of things divine; and worthy of hell thou art  
For this thy witless pride; since yesterday  
Such holy deeds were by Saint Francis wrought  
That, had God’s angel wrought them, they had been  
No whit more wondrous: wherefore to throw stones  
If he had bidden thee, thou shouldst have obeyed:  
For that which on this road was done by him  
Came of God’s ordinance, as plain appears  
By the good end which afterward ensued:  
Since if he had not reconciled the folk  
Who were at strife together, not alone  
Had many bodies been with daggers slain,  
Which was afoot already, but many souls  
Likewise the devil had dragged down to hell;  
Wherefore thou art a most fond man and proud,  
At that to murmur which, full plain to see,  
Springs from the will of God.’ And all these things,

## BROTHER MASSEO TO TURN ROUND 45

Which Brother Masseo spake with his own heart  
Going before him, were of God revealed  
Unto Saint Francis : wherefore, drawing near,  
Saint Francis said to him : ‘ Hold fast the thoughts  
Which now thou thinkest, seeing that they are good,  
And serviceable, and of God inspired :  
But thy first murmuring was blind, proud, and vian,  
And by the devil implanted in thy heart.’  
Then Brother Masseo saw that of a truth  
Saint Francis knew the secrets of his soul,  
And wist full surely that in all his acts  
The Spirit of heavenly wisdom did direct  
The holy Father.

To the praise of Christ.

## XI

HOW SAINT FRANCIS WISHED  
TO ABASE BROTHER MASSEO

SAINT FRANCIS being minded to abase Brother Masseo, that through many gifts And graces, which God gave him, he might not Uplift him to vainglory, but grow up By virtue of humility, therewith, From virtue unto virtue, once, when he Was lodging in a lonely place with those True Saints, his first disciples, among whom Was the said Brother Masseo, on a day, All the companions present, spake and said To Brother Masseo : ‘ Thy companions here, O Brother Masseo, one and all have grace For contemplation and for prayer, but thou The grace, by preaching of God’s word, to give Their fill unto the people : for which cause, That these on contemplation may be bent, I will thou do the office of the door, Of alms, and of the kitchen ; and, withal, When eat the other Brethren, thou shalt eat Outside the House-door, that to those who come, Or ere they knock thou mayst vouchsafe their fill Of the good words of God ; so need there none Go forth, but thou, to greet them ; and this do As holy Obedience doth require.’ Thereat

Brother Masseo drew aback his hood,  
And bowed his head, and humbly did receive  
And keep the holy mandate, many days  
Doing the office of the door, of alms,  
And of the kitchen. His companions then,  
As men by God illumined, 'gan to feel  
Sore prickings at the heart, bethinking them  
That Brother Masseo was indeed a man  
Of high perfection, as themselves, or more,  
Yet all on him, no whit on them, was laid  
The burden of the House. For which thing's sake  
Moved all by one desire they gat them forth,  
And prayed the holy Father to mete out  
Those offices amongst them, seeing indeed  
Their consciences could brook not that such toils  
Be borne by Brother Masseo. Hearing this,  
Saint Francis to their counsels yielded him,  
Bowed to their will, and, having called him, said  
To Brother Masseo: 'Thy companions here,  
O Brother Masseo, of the offices  
I gave thee would partake: I therefore will  
That the said offices divided be.'

Said Brother Masseo with deep humbleness  
And patience: 'Father, that thou layest on me,  
Or whole, or part, I deem it done by God.'

Thereat Saint Francis, when he saw their love,  
And Brother Masseo's humbleness of heart,  
Anon discoursed to them in wondrous wise  
On blest humility, exhorting them  
How that the greater are the gifts of grace

48 ST. FRANCIS AND BROTHER MASSEO

Vouchsafed to us of God, the more should we  
Be humble, since without humility  
No virtue is with God acceptable.  
And, done the preaching, with the tenderest love  
Forthwith those offices he meted out  
Among them.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XII

HOW SAINT FRANCIS PRAYED FOR  
THE GRACE OF POVERTY AND  
RECEIVED THE SAME

THE wondrous thrall and follower of Christ,  
To wit, Saint Francis, that in everything  
He might to Christ conform him perfectly—  
Who, as the gospel saith, by two and two  
Sent His disciples forth to every town  
And place Himself would visit—having now  
By Christ's ensample brought companions twelve  
Together, sent them forth by two and two,  
To preach throughout the world. And, that he  
might  
Of true obedience an ensample set,  
He was himself the foremost to go forth,  
According to Christ's pattern, who began,  
Or ere He taught, to do. For the which cause,  
Having assigned the other parts o' the earth  
To his companions, and accompanied  
Himself by Brother Masseo, he took road  
Toward the land of France. And, on a day,  
Coming nigh famished to a certain town,  
They went begging their bread, for love of God,  
As the Rule bade them: and Saint Francis took  
One street, and Brother Masseo one. But since  
Saint Francis was a meanly favoured man,

And small of stature, and, for this thing's sake,  
Deemed a vile beggar of him who knew him not,  
He for his asking gat but paltry bits,  
And scanty morsels of dry bread : whereas  
Brother Masseo, seeing that he was tall  
And of fine presence, unto him were given  
Enow of goodly portions and of great,  
And from the unbroken loaf. Now when they had  
made

An end of begging, afterward they met  
To eat together in a certain place  
Forth from the town, where was a fountain fair,  
That had a stone beside it fair and great,  
Where all the alms they set that each had ta'en  
In begging. And Saint Francis, when he saw  
That Brother Masseo's portions of the bread  
Were more, more fine, and larger than his own,  
Brake forth in utmost gladness, and exclaimed :  
' O Brother Masseo, worthy are we not  
Of such great treasure ' : and to him these words  
Full many a time repeating answer made  
Brother Masseo : ' How of treasure speak,  
My Father, where is such deep poverty  
And lack of all things needful ? Here we have  
Nor cloth, nor knife, nor plate, nor porringer,  
Nor house, nor board, nor serving-man, nor maid.'  
Thereto replied Saint Francis : ' This is that  
I deem great treasure, where is no house prepared  
By human art, but whatsoe'er is here  
Hath been prepared by Providence divine,

As plain appeareth in this bread we begged,  
And fair stone table and pellucid spring.  
Wherefore I will we pray to God that this  
So noble treasure of holy poverty,  
The which hath God for servitor, He may  
Make us with all our heart to love.' And when  
These words were spoken, and their repast was  
done,

After prayer made, they rose to wend their way  
France-ward ; and, coming to a certain church,  
Saint Francis unto his companion said :  
' Let us withdraw into this church to pray.'  
And thereupon Saint Francis passed behind  
The altar, and betook himself to prayer ;  
And such surpassing ardour he received  
From divine visitation, as he prayed,  
The which in very truth so fired his soul  
To love of holy poverty, that now  
From colour of face, and strangely parted lips,  
He seemed to be forth-shooting flames of love.  
And, coming to him thus with fervour fired,  
He said to his companion : ' Ah ! ah ! ah !  
Brother Masseo, give thyself to me !'  
And this he said three times ; and the third time  
Saint Francis with his breath upraised in air  
Brother Masseo, and in front of him  
Launched, a great spear-length ; and amazement  
vast  
Seized Brother Masseo. And, as afterward  
To his companions he recounted it,

## 52 HOW SAINT FRANCIS PRAYED

While by the breath Saint Francis breathed on him  
Raised and impelled, such sweetness of the soul  
He felt, and comfort of the Holy Ghost,  
As all his life-time felt he ne'er the like.  
This done, Saint Francis said : 'Comrade most  
dear,  
Now hie we to Saint Peter and Saint Paul,  
And pray them teach and aid us to possess  
The sumless treasure, poverty divine—  
Treasure which so august and godlike is,  
That in these filthy vessels we are all  
Unworthy to possess it, seeing that this  
Is that celestial virtue, whereby things  
Earthly and transient are trod underfoot,  
And every trouble lifted from the soul,  
That all unfettered with Eternal God  
She may unite her. This that virtue is  
Which makes the spirit housed on earth to hold  
High converse with the Angels : this is that  
Which with Christ sojourned on the Cross, with  
Christ  
Was buried, rose again with Christ, with Christ  
Mounted to heaven ; which even in this life  
Unto the souls that love her doth vouchsafe  
Ease to soar heavenward, since she guardeth still  
The arms of true humility and love.  
Now therefore intercession let us crave  
Of Christ's most holy Apostles, who themselves  
Were perfect lovers of this gospel-pearl,  
Grace to obtain of our Lord Jesu Christ,

That He would make us of His sacred ruth  
Worthy to be true lovers, worshippers,  
And lowly learners of the thrice beloved  
And ever precious gospel poverty.'

Amid such communing to Rome they came,  
And passed within Saint Peter's, and thereof  
Saint Francis in one corner, and in one  
Brother Masseo gat himself to prayer :  
And as they bode long time with many tears  
Praying devoutly, to Saint Francis' sight  
In glorious sheen the blest Apostles twain,  
Peter and Paul, appeared, who said to him :  
' Since thou dost ask and crave to follow that  
Which followed was of Christ and of the blest  
Apostles, therefore Jesu Christ the Lord  
Bids us declare to thee thy prayer is heard,  
And that to thee and to thy followers  
In full perfection is vouchsafed of God  
The treasure of most holy poverty.  
And, further, we bring word to thee from Him  
That whosoe'er shall follow this desire  
By thine ensample perfectly, hath pledge  
Of bliss in life eternal : and thyself  
And all thy followers shall be blest of God.'  
So, having said, they vanished from his sight,  
Leaving Saint Francis with heart-solace filled.  
Anon, from prayer uprising, he returned  
To his companion, and inquired if God  
Had naught to him revealed : he answered no.  
Then told Saint Francis how that to himself

## 54 HOW ST. FRANCIS PRAYED FOR POVERTY

The holy Apostles had appeared, and what  
Revealed to him : whereat right joyfully  
Back to Spoleto's valley they resolved  
Each to return, their journey into France  
Foregoing.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XIII

HOW CHRIST APPEARED TO SAINT  
FRANCIS AND HIS COMPANIONS

SAINT FRANCIS, when the Order first began,  
Being with his companions on a time  
Met in a certain place, to talk of Christ,  
He, by the ardour of his spirit moved,  
Bade one of them in God's name ope his mouth,  
And utter forth of God what words soe'er  
The Holy Ghost inspired. The Brother then  
His hest fulfilling, and in wondrous sort  
Speaking of God, Saint Francis laid on him  
Silence, and bade another do the like:  
And he obeying, as in subtlest wise  
Of God he spake, Saint Francis upon him  
Laid the like silence, and so bade a third  
Discourse of God; and in like manner he  
So deeply of God's hidden mysteries  
'Gan to give utterance, that Saint Francis knew  
He also by the Holy Spirit spake,  
Even as the other twain: which was withal  
By special sign made manifest, for as  
They parleyed thus together, in their midst  
Appeared the blessed Christ, who, in the form  
Of a fair youth, vouchsafed His benison,  
And with such sweetness filled them, that they all  
Were ravished from themselves, and lay as dead,

## 56 HOW CHRIST APPEARED TO ST. FRANCIS

Not heeding aught of this world. Afterward,  
When to themselves they came, Saint Francis said :  
‘ Brethren belovèd, give ye thanks to God,  
Who by the mouth of simple folk hath deigned  
The wealth of heavenly wisdom to reveal :  
Since God it is that openeth the mouths  
Of dumb men, and the tongues of simple folk  
Maketh to utter words surpassing wise.’

## XIV

HOW SAINT CLARE ATE WITH SAINT  
FRANCIS IN SAINT MARY OF THE  
ANGELS

SAINT FRANCIS, at Assisi sojourning,  
Would visit oft Saint Clare, and unto her  
Give holy admonitions. Now she had  
A strong desire for once to eat with him,  
And to that end besought him many a time,  
But ne'er that solace would he grant to her.  
For which cause his companions, when they saw  
Saint Clare's desire, unto Saint Francis said :  
' Father, we deem this sternness sorteth not  
With heavenly charity, that to Sister Clare,  
A maid so saintly and by God beloved,  
Thou should'st not hearken in a thing so slight  
As to eat bread with thee, and that the more,  
Seeing that through thy preaching she renounced  
The riches and the splendour of the world.  
Yea, in good sooth a greater grace than this,  
An she had asked thee, wert thou bound to do  
Unto thy spiritual plant.' Thereat  
Replied Saint Francis : ' Think ye that I ought  
To grant it ? ' His companions answered him :  
' Yea, Father, meet and right it is that thou  
Do her this solace.' Then Saint Francis said :  
' Since so to you, so seems it then to me ;

And, more to comfort her, I will this feast  
Be in Saint Mary of the Angels held ;  
Since at Saint Damian's for so long a time  
She hath been cloistered, that 'twill gladden her  
To look a little on Saint Mary's House,  
Where she was shorn, and unto Jesu Christ  
Espoused : there let us eat then in God's name  
Together.' And when the appointed day was come,  
Saint Clare from out her Convent issuing,  
With one companion, and accompanied  
By the Companions of Saint Francis came  
Thus to Saint Mary of the Angels, where,  
Her salutation to Maid Mary given  
Before the shrine where she was shorn and veiled,  
To view the House they led her, till such hour  
As they should dine. Saint Francis therewithal  
On the bare ground, the while, let spread the board,  
As was his wont : and when the hour was come,  
They set them down, Saint Francis and Saint Clare  
Together, and, with Saint Clare's companion, one  
Of the Companions of Saint Francis : then  
Who yet remained did range them at the board  
Right humbly. And behold ! at the first dish,  
Saint Francis 'gan so sweetly speak of God  
In words so wondrous, that, the overflow  
Of grace divine descending from on high  
Upon them, one and all were rapt in God :  
And while they were thus rapt, with eyes and hands  
Upraised to heaven, those of Assisi's town,  
Bettona, and the country round about,

Beheld Saint Mary of the Angels—all  
The House, and the wood near it—burning bright ;  
And there appeared as 'twere a mighty fire,  
That did the Church, the House, the forest, fill ;  
Whereat the Assisans gat them at great speed  
Thither to quench it, thinking the whole place  
Was fiercely blazing. But, arrived the House,  
And finding there no fire, they entered in,  
And saw Saint Francis, and Saint Clare, and all  
Their company, so sitting, rapt in God,  
In contemplation round that humble board.  
Whence understood they of a truth that that  
Had not been earthly, but celestial, fire,  
Miraculously sent by God to shew  
And symbolise the fire of love divine,  
Whereby those holy Brothers, holy Nuns,  
Were soul-enkindled ; and they went their way  
Much comforted. A long time afterward,  
Saint Francis, and Saint Clare, and all the rest,  
Returning to themselves, and feeling sweet  
Refreshment from that spiritual food,  
Gave but scant heed unto the body's fare.  
And so Saint Clare, this blest refection done,  
Back to Saint Damian with good escort hied ;  
And, seeing her, the Sisters were right glad,  
For they had feared Saint Francis sending her  
To rule some other Convent, as ere now  
Her holy Sister Agnes had been sent  
To rule in Florence o'er the Sisterhood  
Of Monticelli ; and Saint Francis once

## 60 HOW ST. CLARE ATE WITH ST. FRANCIS

Had said to her: ‘Be ready, if need were  
I sent thee to some other House’: and she,  
Of holy Obedience a daughter true,  
Made answer: ‘Father, send me where thou wilt,  
Ready am I to go.’ And therefore now  
Much joyed the Sisters to receive her back;  
And therewithal Saint Clare from that time forth  
Remained much solaced.

To the praise of Christ.

## XV

HOW SAINT FRANCIS PREACHED TO  
THE BIRDS

THE holy Francis, humble thrall of God,  
Soon after his conversion having now  
Assembled, and within the Order brought  
Many companions, fell to pondering deep,  
In mighty doubt of that he ought to do—  
Or wholly give himself to prayer, or else  
Sometimes to preaching: and hereof he craved  
Right earnestly to know God's will. And since  
The holy humbleness, that in him was,  
Suffered him not upon himself presume,  
Or his own prayers, he thought the Will Divine  
To seek through prayers of others: so he called  
Brother Masseo, and bespoke him thus:  
' Hie thee to Sister Clare, and from my mouth  
Bid her, with one of her companions  
Most spiritual, devoutly to pray God  
That it might please Him manifest to me  
Whether of these were better—or to give  
Myself to preaching, or to prayer alone:  
Then go to Brother Silvester, and bespeak  
Him in like manner.' He had lived i' the world,  
And was that Brother Silvester who had seen  
A gold cross issue from Saint Francis' mouth,

Whose height reached heaven, whose breadth to the earth's end.

And the said Brother Silvester was of such Deep sanctity of life, that whatsoe'er He asked of God was heard and granted him, And oft he talked with God ; for which things' sake Saint Francis held him in heart-worship. So Brother Masseo, as Saint Francis bade, Departed, and performed his embassage First to Saint Clare, and, after, in due course To Brother Silvester, who, receiving it, Forthwith to prayer addressed him, and obtained, Praying, an answer from on high, and turned To Brother Masseo, and on this wise spake : ' Thus saith the Lord : " To Brother Francis say, God hath not called him for himself alone To this estate, but that he may bear fruit Of souls, and many may through him be saved." ' So, to his questing having this response, Brother Masseo to Saint Clare returned, To know what answer she had gained of God : And she replied she had of God received, With her companion, the selfsame response As Brother Silvester. With this message then Brother Masseo to Saint Francis went : And him Saint Francis with most fervent love Greeted, and washed his feet, and made the meal Ready, and, when he had eaten, bade him come Into the wood, and knelt before him there, And drew his hood back, making of his arms

A cross, and thus inquired of him : ‘ What is it  
That my Lord Jesu Christ doth bid me do ? ’  
And Brother Masseo answered : ‘ Even so  
To Brother Silvester, as to Sister Clare  
And to her sister, hath Christ made reply,  
Revealing it to be His will that thou  
Shouldst through the world go preaching, seeing that  
He

Hath chosen thee not for thyself alone,  
But for the sake of other souls beside.’  
This answer then Saint Francis having heard,  
And knowing therefrom the will of Jesu Christ,  
Uprose, and with exceeding fervour said :  
‘ In God’s name go we ! ’ and therewith he took  
Brother Masseo and Brother Agnolo,  
Both holy men, to bear him company,  
And as, by ardour of the spirit driven,  
He went, naught recking of the road or path,  
He came unto a certain village called  
Carmano, and Saint Francis thereupon  
Addressed himself to preach ; but first he bade  
The swallows, that were twittering, to be still  
Till he should end his preaching ; and the birds  
Obeyed him ; and so fervently he preached,  
That all the men and women there were fain  
To quit the village and go after him.  
But this Saint Francis suffered not, and said :  
‘ Be not o’er-hasty, nor from thence depart ;  
And I will order that ye ought to do  
For your souls’ saving.’ And he thereupon

Bethought him the third Order to create,  
Whereby the whole world might salvation win.  
So solace-filled he left them, and full well  
To penitence disposed, and, parting thence,  
Betwixt Carmano and Bevagna came.  
And, ardently as ever journeying on,  
He raised his eyes and certain trees beheld  
Fast by the wayside, on whose boughs were perched  
A multitude of birds innumerable,  
So that Saint Francis was amazed thereat,  
And said to his companions : ‘ In the road  
Ye shall await me here, while I go preach  
Unto the birds my sisters ’: and he went  
Within the field, and to the birds ’gan preach  
That on the ground were sitting ; and at once  
Those that were on the trees did come to him,  
And, one and all, stayed motionless until  
Saint Francis had done preaching, and e’en then  
Departed not till he had given them  
His benediction. And, as afterward  
Brother Masseo unto Brother James  
Of Massa told it, though Saint Francis now  
Walked in their midst, and touched them with his  
cloak,  
No bird did budge for him. And this in brief  
Was what Saint Francis preached to them : ‘ O birds  
My sisters, much to your Creator God  
Are ye beholden, and in every place  
Should alway praise Him, who hath given to you  
Twofold and threefold raiment, and beside

Hath made you free to fly abroad at will,  
And further did preserve in Noah's ark  
A seed of you, that so your race i' the world  
Might minish not: nor less are ye to God  
Beholden for the element of air  
By Him bequeathed you: and, beside all this,  
Ye sow not, neither do ye reap, and God  
Doth feed you, giving you the springs and streams  
To drink of, and for refuge hills and vales,  
And the high trees to make your nests therein:  
And seeing ye know not how to spin or sew,  
God clotheth you, and eke your little ones:  
Right well doth your Creator love you, then,  
Who all these benefits vouchsafeth you.  
Wherefore, my little sisters, look to it  
Ye sin not through ingratitude, but strive  
Ever your utmost to give praise to God.'  
And, as Saint Francis spake these words to them,  
Lo ! all those birds began to ope their beaks,  
Stretch out their necks, and spread abroad their wings,  
Bow reverently their heads to earth, and shew  
By songs and gestures what great joy the words  
Of the holy Father gave them: and with them  
Rejoiced Saint Francis likewise, and was glad ;  
And much amazed him all that multitude  
And wondrous fair diversity of birds,  
And how they hearkened, and their friendly ways;  
For the which cause devoutly did he laud  
Their Maker in them. Last, the preaching done,  
Saint Francis o'er them made the sign o' the Cross,

## 66 SAINT FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

And gave them leave to go : then all those birds  
Did in one flock uplift them into air  
With marvellous songs, and like unto the cross  
Saint Francis had made over them, e'en so  
Divided four-wise, whereof one part flew  
Eastward, one west, a third toward the south,  
And the fourth northward ; and each several flock  
Upon its way sang wondrous songs, thereby  
To symbolise that, as Saint Francis now,  
The standard-bearer of the Cross of Christ,  
Had preached to them, and over them had made  
The sign o' the Cross—according to which sign  
They to the world's four quarters did divide—  
So should the preaching of the Cross of Christ,  
Requickened by Saint Francis, be by him  
And by the Brethren borne through all the world ;  
Which Brethren, like the birds, possessing naught  
In this world, to God's Providence alone  
.Commend their being.

To Christ's praise. Amen.

## XVI

HOW A LITTLE LAD SAW SAINT  
FRANCIS TALKING WITH CHRIST

A LITTLE lad right pure and innocent,  
Was, while Saint Francis lived, received within  
The Order, and abode in a small House,  
Wherein the Brothers of necessity  
Slept twain a bed: and on a time it chanced  
Saint Francis came to the said House at eve,  
And after Compline gat him to repose,  
That, while the other Brethren slept, he might  
Arise, as was his wont, by night to pray.  
Now the said little lad had set his heart  
To watch Saint Francis' ways full diligently,  
His saintliness to learn, and above all  
Know how he bore him when by night he rose.  
And, to the end that sleep might cheat him not,  
The aforesaid little lad lay down to rest  
Next to Saint Francis, and his own cord tied  
Unto Saint Francis' cord, that he might feel  
When he arose: and naught hereof perceived  
Saint Francis. But at night in his first sleep,  
When all the Brothers slept, Saint Francis rose  
From sleep, and, finding his cord fastened thus,  
Loosed it so softly that the little lad  
Felt nothing, and alone Saint Francis went

## 68 HOW A LITTLE LAD SAW ST. FRANCIS

Into the wood which bordered on the House,  
And entered a small cell that was therein,  
And fell to prayer. After a little time  
The lad awoke, and, finding the cord loosed,  
And up and gone Saint Francis, rose himself  
And went in search of him : and seeing the door  
Open, which led into the wood, he deemed  
Saint Francis had gone thither, and himself  
Entered the wood. And, coming nigh the place  
Where prayed Saint Francis, he began to hear  
Much talking, and drew closer for to learn  
What the sound meant, and saw a marvellous  
light

Which did surround Saint Francis, and therein  
Christ, and the Virgin Mary, and with them  
Saint John, both Baptist and Evangelist,  
And a great multitude of Angels, who  
Were talking with Saint Francis. And this lad,  
Seeing and hearing, fell to earth in a swoon :  
And when the mystic, holy vision closed,  
Saint Francis, homeward wending, with his feet  
Happed on the little lad, who lay as dead  
Upon the path, and, pitying, in his arms  
Uplifted him, and bare him to his bed,  
As the good shepherd doth his little sheep.  
And learning from him after how he had seen  
That Vision, he forbade him tell the thing  
Ever to any, while himself should live.  
And growing in God's grace abundantly,  
And deep love for Saint Francis, afterward

The little lad became a valiant man  
In the Order, nor until Saint Francis died  
Aught of that Vision to the Brotherhood  
Revealed he.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XVII

HOW SAINT FRANCIS HELD A  
CHAPTER AT ASSISI

THE holy Francis, faithful thrall of Christ,  
Once at Saint Mary of the Angels held  
A Chapter General, at which Chapter met  
More than five thousand Brothers. Thither came  
Saint Dominic, Head and Founder of the Rule  
Of preaching Friars, from Borgogna, then  
Bound Rome-ward. So when to his ears was borne  
This gathering of the Chapter, at that time  
Held by Saint Francis in Saint Mary's plain,  
Named of the Angels, to the sight he hied,  
With seven of his Order. Furthermore  
At the said Chapter was a Cardinal,  
Devoted to Saint Francis, who erewhile  
Had prophesied to him he should be Pope :  
And so it came to pass. This Cardinal  
Had of set purpose from Perugia's town,  
Where the Court sojourned, to Assisi come :  
And day by day he gat him down to see  
Saint Francis and his Brothers, and at times  
Would chant the Mass, at times discourse to them  
In Chapter : and deep solace and delight  
Had the said Cardinal, whene'er he came  
To view that holy fellowship. And as  
Upon the plain around Saint Mary's shrine

He saw the Brothers set in companies—  
Here forty, here a hundred, and here twice  
Or thrice that tale together, wholly bent  
Upon discourse of God, on prayer, on tears,  
On tasks of charity, and continuing  
Rapt in such silence, with such modesty,  
That not a sound was heard there—marvelling  
At all that host so marshalled, he exclaimed  
With tears and deep devotion : ‘ This is sure  
The camp and army of the Knights of God.’  
And none was heard in all that multitude  
Prating or jesting, but where met soe’er  
A company of Brothers, or they prayed,  
Or said the Office, or bewailed their sins,  
Or sins of benefactors, or discoursed  
Of God, or of the saving of the soul.  
Now in that camp were roofs of willow-withes,  
And mats of rushes, ranged in groups, as were  
The Brothers of the divers Provinces :  
Wherefore that Chapter also gat to name  
The Chapter of rush-mats or willow-withes.  
On the bare earth their beds were, and some had  
A little straw thereto : of stones or wood  
Their pillows : for the which things’ sake so deep  
Was the devotion toward them of who heard  
Or saw, and such their fame for sanctity,  
That from the Pope’s Court, at Perugia then,  
And other districts of Spoleto’s vale,  
Many to see them came, Counts, Barons, Knights,  
And others gently born, much country-folk,

And Cardinals and Bishops therewithal,  
Abbots and other Churchmen—to behold  
This gathering so holy, great, and meek,  
That the like multitude of saintly men  
The world ne'er saw together: and in chief  
Came they the holy Father and the Head  
Of that most sacred Order to behold,  
Who such fair booty from the world had won,  
And so devout and fair a fellowship  
Assembled, in the steps of Jesu Christ  
To follow—the true Shepherd. So when now  
The Chapter General was fully met,  
Saint Francis, holy Father of them all,  
And Minister in chief, with soul afire  
Set forth the Word of God, and preached to them  
In a loud voice that which the Holy Ghost  
Moved him to utter: and these words he took  
For theme of his discourse: ‘ My little sons,  
Great things we have promised, but things greater far  
Are promised us of God, if we but keep  
That we have promised, and expect in faith  
His promises to-us-ward. The world’s joy  
Is brief, but endless the ensuing pain:  
Little the pain of this life, infinite  
The glory of the other.’ Upon these words  
He, most devoutly preaching, comforted  
The Brethren all, and to Obedience  
Led them, and reverence for Holy Church,  
Their Mother, and to fraternal love, and prayer  
For all men, and in worldly teen to have

Patience, and temperance in prosperity ;  
Ever to live as Angels pure and chaste ;  
With God and men and their own hearts to be  
At peace and concord, and to love withal  
And cherish holiest Poverty. And here  
' I charge you all,' quoth he, ' as is required  
By holy Obedience, that no one of you,  
Met thus together, be careful or take thought  
Whereof to eat or drink, nor yet provide  
Things needful for the body, but give yourselves  
To prayer and praise of God alone, and leave  
Care for your bodies unto Him, since He  
Hath special care for you.' And with glad heart  
And joyful countenance received they all  
This charge, and, when Saint Francis made an end  
Of preaching, cast them to the earth in prayer.  
Thereat Saint Dominic, who at all these things  
Was present, marvelled mightily at the charge  
Saint Francis gave, and deemed it indiscreet,  
Nor could conceive how all that multitude  
Might else support them, save by thought and care  
For what the body needed. But the chief  
Shepherd, the blessed Christ, willing to shew  
What heed for His own sheep, and for His poor  
What tender love He had, inspired the folk  
Who at Perugia and Spoleto dwelt,  
Foligno and Assisi, and all lands  
Pertaining, straightway to bring food and drink  
Unto that holy Company. And lo !  
On a sudden thence came men with sumpter-mules,

Horses and wagons charged with bread and wine,  
Honeycombs, cheese, and more good cheer to boot,  
According as the poor of Christ had need.  
Beside this, napkins, pitchers, cups, they brought,  
And other vessels, that might serve the turn  
Of such a multitude : and happy man  
He deemed him, who might bring the most, or do  
The readiest service ; in such wise that even  
Barons and knights and other gentlefolk,  
Who came to gaze, did wait upon them now  
With deep devotion and humility.  
Wherefore Saint Dominic, when these things he saw,  
Knowing of a truth that Providence divine  
Was working in them, humbly did confess  
He had misjudged Saint Francis indiscreet  
Touching the charge, and knelt before him there,  
And meekly told his fault, and added thus :  
' God of a truth hath special care for these  
His holy poor ones, and I knew it not :  
And from henceforth I pledge me to observe  
The gospel poverty, and in God's name  
Denounce all Brothers of my Order who  
In the said Order shall presume to hold  
Aught in possession.' So Saint Dominic  
Was mightily upbuilded by the faith  
Of the most holy Francis, and no less  
By the Obedience and the poverty  
Of that so great, well-ordered fellowship,  
And by the Providence of God, and rich  
Abundance of all goodly things.

Came word

In the same Chapter to Saint Francis how  
That divers Brothers wore upon their flesh  
Corslets and hoops of iron, for the which cause  
Many were weak, some dying, and not a few  
Let from their prayers. Saint Francis thereupon,  
Like a wise Father, forthwith gave command  
By holy Obedience, that whoso had  
Corslet or hoop of iron should doff the same,  
And lay them at his feet: and so they did:  
Of corslets then were told five hundred full,  
Of iron hoops yet more, some for the arms,  
Some for the loins, so that a mighty heap  
They made: and there Saint Francis one and all  
Bade leave them.

After this, the Chapter done,  
Saint Francis, comforting them all in good,  
And eke admonishing how they must escape  
Untainted of this evil world, with God's  
And his own blessing to their Provinces,  
Each one with spiritual joy consoled,  
Dismissed them.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XVIII

HOW CHRIST APPEARED TO SAINT  
FRANCIS, WHEN SUFFERING  
FROM A MALADY OF THE EYES

SAINT FRANCIS with sore malady of the eyes  
Being one time distempered, it befell  
That Cardinal Ugolino, who was then  
Protector of the Order, in the fond  
Love which he bare him, wrote that he should come  
And visit him at Rieti, where were then  
For eyes the best physicians. Thereupon,  
This letter of the Cardinal received,  
Saint Francis to Saint Damian's first repaired,  
Where was Saint Clare, devoted Spouse of Christ,  
Some solace to vouchsafe her, and from thence  
Go to the Cardinal. But, being there,  
On the next night Saint Francis' eyes waxed worse,  
So that no glimmer of light could he discern :  
And, since he might not journey forth, Saint Clare  
Made him a little cell of reeds, wherein  
The better to repose : but what with pain  
From his infirmity, and the swarming rats  
Which did molest him sore, no jot of ease,  
Either by night or day, Saint Francis had.  
And seeing that of this pain and misery  
Yet more he needs must suffer, he 'gan think  
And recognize therein a scourge of God

For his offences, and with all his heart,  
And his mouth's utterance, fell to thanking God,  
In a loud voice exclaiming : ‘ O my Lord,  
All this deserve I, and much worse than this.  
Lord Jesu Christ, good Shepherd, who to us,  
Sinners and worthless, dost in divers pains  
And bodily anguish Thy compassion shew,  
Grant unto me, a little sheep of Thine,  
Virtue and grace, that for no outward ill,  
Anguish, or sorrow, I may part from Thee.’  
And, this prayer made, there came a voice from  
heaven :

‘ Answer me, Francis : were the whole earth gold,  
And all the seas, and springs, and rivers balm,  
And stones of price the mountains, hills, and rocks,  
And thou shouldst find a treasure nobler yet  
Than these things are—as much as gold than earth,  
And balm than water is, and precious stones  
Than rocks and mountains, nobler—shouldst thou not  
Be well content and happy ? ’ Answer made  
Saint Francis : ‘ All unworthy, Lord, am I  
Of such a priceless treasure.’ And the voice  
Of God bespake him, saying : ‘ Have thou good cheer,  
Francis, for this the treasure is of life  
Eternal, which I hold in store for thee,  
Against the hour when I possess thee of it ;  
And all this trouble and pain an earnest is  
Of that blest treasure.’ Then Saint Francis called  
To his companion, and, with fervent joy  
Filled for so glorious a promise, said :

‘ Go we unto the Cardinal ! ’ And, Saint Clare  
 With holy words first comforting, he took  
 Humbly his leave of her, and so set forth  
 Toward Rieti. And, when now drawn nigh  
 The city, so vast a multitude of folk  
 Came out to meet him, that for this thing’s sake  
 He would not enter in, but to a church  
 Betook him, which was nigh the town, perchance  
 A two miles’ journey. Then the city-folk,  
 Learning that he was in the church, flocked forth  
 To see him, so that the vineyard of the church  
 Was marred, and all the grapes plucked off, whereat  
 The priest, sore grieved at heart, repented him  
 To have received Saint Francis in his church.  
 Then, to Saint Francis being revealed of God  
 What the priest thought, he called for him and said :  
 ‘ How many measures, dearest Father, say,  
 Yields thee this vineyard yearly at its best ? ’  
 Quoth he : ‘ Twelve measures.’ And Saint Francis  
     said :  
 ‘ I pray thee, Father, to bear patiently  
 My sojourning some days, since good repose  
 I find here : and let any pluck the grapes  
 Of this thy vineyard, for the love of God  
 And me, His little poor one : and behold !  
 I promise in the name of Jesu Christ  
 My Lord that twenty measures it this year  
 Shall yield thee.’ And this thing Saint Francis  
     wrought  
 Of his there tarrying for the mighty fruit

Of souls that were seen gathered from the folk  
Who came there ; of whom many went their way  
Drunken with love divine, and left the world.  
This promise of Saint Francis, then, the priest  
Trusted, and did the vineyard freely leave  
For those who came to him. O wonderful !  
The vineyard was all wasted and plucked bare,  
So that scarce any clusters there remained ;  
The time of vintage came ; the priest plucked off  
The aforesaid clusters, thrust them in the vat,  
Trod them, and, as Saint Francis promised him,  
Gat twenty measures thence of the best wine.  
By the which miracle is plainly given  
To know that, as the vineyard, spoiled of grapes,  
In wine abounded, so the people of Christ,  
Barren of virtue by their sin, should oft  
Through merit of Saint Francis, and the love  
He taught them, in good fruit abound of true  
Repentance.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XIX

CONCERNING A NOVICE WHO HATED  
THE HABIT OF SAINT FRANCIS

A YOUTH right noble and delicately reared  
Into the Order of Saint Francis came,  
Who, after some days, by the Devil impelled,  
'Gan so to loathe the habit which he wore,  
That seemed to him he wore a sack most vile :  
The sleeves abhorred he, and the hood he loathed ;  
And for their length and roughness these things seemed  
A load intolerable : and, more and more  
His hatred growing for the holy life,  
At last he purposed to forgo the garb,  
And to the world return. It was his wont  
Already, as by his Master taught, each time  
He passed the Convent-altar, where was kept  
The Body of Christ, to fall upon his knees  
With utmost reverence, and draw back his hood,  
And bow, with arms held cross-wise. Now it chanced  
That on the night when he should issue forth,  
The altar of the Convent he must pass ;  
And, passing it, according to his wont  
He knelt and did a reverence : and behold !  
On a sudden he was rapt in soul, and saw  
A marvellous vision, shewn to him of God ;  
For he beheld before his eyes go by  
As 'twere an endless multitude of Saints,

In form like a procession, two and two,  
Clad all in glorious raiment, robes of price,  
Faces and hands resplendent like the sun ;  
And with angelic chants and songs they went :  
Among which Saints were twain more nobly clad  
And decked than all the others : and these were  
With such exceeding brightness wrapped around,  
That sore amazement held who looked on them :  
And, as it were in the procession's close,  
One he espied so gloriously arrayed,  
That he appeared a new-made Knight to be,  
More honoured than the others. The said youth,  
Seeing this vision, marvelled in himself,  
And wist not what the stately pomp might mean,  
Nor gat he heart to ask, but stood amazed  
By reason of its sweetness. None the less,  
When all the pomp had passed, he summoned heart,  
Ran to the hindmost, and sore-quaking asked :  
‘ Pray you, belovèd, tell me who are these  
So wonderful, who go in this august  
Procession ? ’ They replied : ‘ Know, little son,  
We are all Brothers Minor, and come now  
From the glory of Paradise.’ And he inquired :  
‘ Who be those twain that shine beyond the rest ? ’  
‘ These are Saint Francis and Saint Anthony,’  
They answered, ‘ and this last, whom thou behold’st  
So honoured, is a holy Brother, who died  
Of late : the which, since he fought valiantly  
Against temptations, and to the end endured,  
Now to the glory of Paradise we lead

In triumph: and this raiment that we wear,  
Of woof so fine, God gave us in exchange  
For the rough tunics, which full patiently  
We wore while in the Rule: and as for this  
So glorious brightness, thou beholdst in us,  
'Twas given of God for the meek penitence  
And holy poverty the which we kept  
With pureness and obedience to the end.  
Deem it, then, no hard matter, little son,  
To wear the sackcloth of the holy life,  
Which in such fruit aboundeth: seeing that if,  
Clad in Saint Francis' sackcloth, for Christ's love  
Thou spurn the world, and mortify the flesh,  
And 'gainst the Devil fight, and play the man,  
Thou shalt, as we, the selfsame garments wear,  
And radiance of glory.' When these words  
Were spoken, the youth, returning to himself,  
Unto the Guardian and the Brothers owned  
His trespass, and from that time forth desired  
The roughness of the penance and the robes,  
And in great sanctity his life did end  
Within the Order.

To the praise of Christ.

## XX

THE CONVERSION OF THE WOLF OF  
AGOBIO

WHAT time Saint Francis at Agobio dwelt,  
Within Agobio's borders there appeared  
A wolf, gigantic, terrible, and fierce,  
The which devoured not beasts alone, but men,  
So that the city-folk stood one and all  
In mighty dread : for many a time he drew  
Nigh to their city, and all men went armed  
Who issued from the land, as though they went  
To battle : nor yet who happed on him alone  
Might aught prevail against him ; till for fear  
Of the said wolf to such a pass they came,  
That none abroad durst venture. For which cause  
Saint Francis, having pity upon the folk,  
Would fain this wolf encounter, though all men  
Gave counsel to withhold him : wherefore he,  
Making the sign of the most holy Cross,  
Went forth with his companions, all his trust  
In God reposing ; and when now the rest  
Misdoubted to go further, he nathless  
Took road toward the place where the wolf lay.  
And lo ! in sight of many who had come forth  
This miracle to witness, the said wolf  
Made at Saint Francis with his mouth agape :

And, drawing near, Saint Francis over him  
Did make the sign of the most holy Cross,  
And called him, saying: ‘Come hither, Brother  
wolf;

I bid thee, in Christ’s name, thou do no scathe  
To me, or any.’ O wondrous thing to tell !  
No sooner had Saint Francis made the Cross,  
Than straightway closed his mouth the terrible  
wolf,

And stayed his running, and, lamb-like, on com-  
mand

Came meekly, and, crouching at Saint Francis’ feet,  
Lay prone. Then spake Saint Francis: ‘Brother  
wolf,

Much mischief in these regions hast thou wrought,  
And monstrous ills, slaying and ravaging  
God’s creatures, without leave of Him ; and not  
Beasts only hast thou slaughtered and devoured  
But hast e’en dared deface and slaughter men,  
Made in God’s image ; for the which thing’s sake,  
As thief and heinous murderer, thou deserv’st  
The gibbet, and all men murmur and cry out  
Against thee, and all this country is thy foe.

But, Brother wolf, fain would I now make peace  
‘Twixt thee and these, so thou sin not again,  
And these forgive thee thy past trespasses,  
And neither men nor dogs pursue thee more.’  
Upon the utterance of these words, the wolf  
With gesture of his body, and tail, and ears,  
And bowing of the head, gave token plain

Of his assent to what Saint Francis said,  
And will to abide thereby. Then once again  
On this wise spake Saint Francis : ‘ Brother wolf,  
Since thou art fain to make and keep this peace,  
I hereby promise, so long as thou shalt live,  
That I will cause the people of this land  
To give thee food continually, that thou  
No more feel hunger-pangs, for well I wot  
That thou through hunger all these ills hast done.  
But, seeing that I this grace for thee obtain,  
O Brother wolf, I will thou promise me  
No living thing henceforth, or man, or beast,  
To injure : dost thou promise ? ’ And the wolf  
With bowing of the head gave token clear  
That he so promised. And Saint Francis said :  
‘ O Brother wolf, I will thou plight me troth  
Of this thy promise, that I may trust thee well ’ :  
And, as Saint Francis to receive the pledge  
Stretched forth his hand, the wolf upraised his paw,  
And placed it in his hand familiarly,  
Giving what token of good faith he could.  
Then said Saint Francis : ‘ Now, O Brother wolf,  
I charge thee, in the name of Jesu Christ,  
That thou, misdoubting nothing, come with me ;  
And let us go together in God’s name  
To ratify this treaty.’ And the wolf  
Obediently went with him, like a lamb  
For meekness, so that all the citizens,  
Beholding, marvelled greatly. And forthwith  
Through the whole countryside this wonder spread,

So that all people, men and women-folk,  
And great alike and small, and old and young,  
Drew to the market-place, to see the wolf  
Beside Saint Francis. And when all the folk  
Were come together, Saint Francis rose to preach  
And, amongst other things, spake also this :  
How that for their transgressions God allowed  
Such ravagings, and that the fire of hell,  
Which for the damned doth last eternally,  
Is far more perilous than a mere wolf's rage,  
Which can but kill the body : ' how sorely then  
Is hell's mouth to be dreaded, when the mouth  
Of one small beast holds such a multitude  
In fear and trembling ! Turn ye then to God,  
Belovèd, and for your sins do penance meet ;  
And God will set you free both from the wolf  
In this time present, and from fires of hell  
Hereafter.' And, the preaching done, ' Give ear,  
My Brothers,' quoth Saint Francis, ' Brother wolf,  
Who stands before you here, hath promised me  
And pledged his troth, to be at peace with you,  
No more in aught offending ; and do ye  
Promise to give him for his daily food  
Such things as shall be needful : and I here  
Stand surety for him that this pact of peace  
He will unbroken keep.' Then all the folk  
As with one voice made promise without fail  
To nourish him. And Saint Francis before all  
Said to the wolf : ' Do thou too, Brother wolf,  
Promise to keep with these the pact of peace

That thou do no offence to man, or beast,  
 Or any creature.' And the wolf knelt down,  
 And thereto bowed his head, with gestures mild  
 Of body, and ears, and tail, as best he might,  
 Shewing his will to keep the compact whole.

Then spake Saint Francis : ' Brother wolf, I will  
 That, as without the gate thou'st plighted troth  
 To this thy promise, so now thy promise-troth  
 Here before all this people thou do plight,  
 That of the surety which I gave for thee  
 Thou wilt not cheat me.' Thereupon the wolf  
 Raised his right paw, and in Saint Francis' hand  
 Placed it : whereat, for this and other acts  
 Aforesaid, in all hearts arose such joy  
 And wonder—through devotion to the Saint,  
 And eke for strangeness of the miracle,  
 And with the wolf now being at peace—that all  
 With one accord 'gan cry aloud to heaven  
 Lauding and blessing God, that He had sent  
 Saint Francis, by whose merits they were freed  
 From the fell monster's maw.

And the said wolf

Thereafter in Agobio lived two years,  
 Going from house to house, and door to door,  
 Familiarly, not injuring any man,  
 Nor being of any injured, and therewith  
 Was nourished by the folk full courteously ;  
 And roaming thus throughout the land, no dog  
 E'er barked behind him. When at last two years  
 Were ended, Brother wolf died of old age ;

## 88 CONVERSION OF THE WOLF OF AGOBIO

Wherewithal the city-folk grieved sore, for while  
So tame they watched him through the city roam,  
The better was Saint Francis' holy life  
By them remembered.

To the praise of Christ.

## XXI

CONCERNING SAINT FRANCIS AND  
THE TURTLE-DOVES

A YOUTH there was, who certain turtle-doves  
Had captured, and was carrying for to sell,  
When, as it happed, Saint Francis, who was aye  
To gentle creatures parlous pitiful,  
Met him, and, looking on the turtle-doves  
With piteous eye, said to the youth : ‘ Good youth,  
I pray thee give these turtle-doves to me,  
That birds so gentle and so innocent,  
The which in holy Scripture likened are  
To souls chaste, meek, and faithful, may not fall  
Into the hands of cruel men, to slay.’  
Anon, by God inspired, he gave them all  
Unto Saint Francis, who, receiving them  
Within his bosom, thus ’gan tenderly  
Bespeak them : ‘ O my sisters, simple doves,  
Chaste, innocent, why let yourselves be ta’en ?  
Now fain would I deliver you from death,  
And make you nests, that ye may fruitful be,  
And multiply, as your Creator bade.’  
Then went Saint Francis and made nests for all ;  
And they, frequenting them, began lay eggs,  
And hatch them e’en before the Brothers’ eyes,  
And with Saint Francis and the rest abode  
Tamely consorting, like as they were fowls

90 ST. FRANCIS AND THE TURTLE-DOVES

Fed ever by them : nay, nor e'er went forth,  
Until Saint Francis blessed and bade them go.  
And to the youth he said : ‘ Thou yet shalt be  
A Brother of this Order, and serve God.’  
And so it came to pass ; for the said youth  
Became a Brother, and with great sanctity  
Lived in the Order.

To Christ's praise. Amen.

## XXII

HOW SAINT FRANCIS SAW THE  
HOUSE SURROUNDED BY DE-  
MONS, AND DROVE OUT ONE  
WHO HAD ENTERED IN

ONCE, as Saint Francis prayed within the House  
Of Portiuncula, God oped his eyes  
So that he saw the whole House girt about  
And, as it were with a great host, beset  
By demons ; nathless none might enter in,  
Because the Brothers were of such sanctity,  
That into no man could the fiends win way.  
But while they thus persisted, so it chanced  
That of these Brothers, one did take offence  
Against his fellow, and pondered in his heart  
How to accuse and be avenged of him.  
Wherefore, as he continued in this thought,  
Anon the fiend, finding the door ajar,  
Entered the House, and lodged him on the neck  
Of the said Brother. Which when he beheld,  
The careful shepherd, who kept ever watch  
Over his sheep-fold, whereinto the wolf  
Had entered to devour his little sheep,  
At once let call that Brother to himself,  
And bade him straight the venom of despite  
Conceived against his neighbour, for which cause

92 HOUSE SURROUNDED BY DEMONS

He lay in the enemy's clutches, to disclose.  
Whereat he, fearful thus to find himself  
Detected by Saint Francis, all the spite  
Revealed, and all the venom, and owned his fault,  
And humbly sued for penance and for grace:  
Which done, when now assailed of his sin  
He had received the penance, suddenly  
Before Saint Francis' very eyes the fiend  
Vanished; and so from the fell monster's clutch,  
By the good shepherd's kindly care, set free,  
The Brother thanked God, and chastened and reproved  
Back to the holy shepherd's fold returned,  
And lived thereafter in great sanctity.

Unto the blessed Christ His praise. Amen.

## XXIII

HOW SAINT FRANCIS CONVERTED  
THE SOLDAN OF BABYLON

SAINT FRANCIS for Christ's faith by zeal impelled,  
And by desire of martyrdom, set forth  
With twelve of his companions on a time—  
Right holy men—to journey oversea  
Straight to the Soldan's Court at Babylon.  
And at a country of the Saracens  
Arriving, where the passes were all watched  
By folk so cruel, that no Christian man  
Might 'scape with life who passed there, as God willed  
They were not slain, but taken, scourged, and bound,  
And brought before the Soldan: before whom  
Saint Francis, by the Holy Spirit taught,  
Preached so devoutly of the faith of Christ,  
That in the cause thereof he was e'en fain  
To pass through fire. The Soldan thereupon  
'Gan deep devotion toward him entertain,  
Both for the constancy of his faith, and that  
Contempt of the world which in him he beheld—  
Since at his hand no gift would he receive,  
Albeit most poor—nor less for the desire  
Which he beheld in him of martyrdom.  
And him thenceforth the Soldan gladly heard,  
And prayed return to him full oft, and gave  
To his companions and himself free leave

To preach where pleased them, and vouchsafed a sign  
Whereby they might 'scape hurt of any man.  
Having this licence then, Saint Francis sent  
Those chosen companions forth by two and two  
To divers countries of the Saracens,  
Christ's faith to preach. But seeing at the last  
He no more fruit could in those regions reap,  
By divine admonition he prepared,  
With his companions all, to get him back  
Among the faithful : and, when all were brought  
Together, to the Soldan he returned,  
And took his leave of him : to whom thus spake  
The Soldan : ' Francis, to the faith of Christ  
I fain would turn me, but I fear as now  
To do it ; since, if these were ware thereof,  
Both me and thee with all thy company  
Would they destroy ; and seeing that thou mayst yet  
Much good perform, and many things of weight  
Have I to accomplish, fain would I fend off  
Thy death and mine : but how I may be saved  
Now teach me, since for aught that thou shalt bid  
Myself am ready.' Thereat Saint Francis said :  
' Now, Sire, will I take leave of thee, but when  
To mine own country I have back returned,  
And passed to heaven, then by the grace of God  
After my death, according as God will,  
Two of my Brothers will I send, from whom  
The baptism of Christ shalt thou receive,  
And shalt be saved, as my Lord Jesu Christ  
Hath shewn me. And do thou thyself the while

Loose thee from all entanglement, that when  
God's grace shall come to thee, thou mayst be found  
Ready for faith and holiness.' And he  
Both promised and performed it. And, this done,  
Saint Francis with that reverend fellowship  
Of blest companions turned him home again,  
And after certain years, through bodily death,  
Rendered his soul to God. And, fallen sick,  
The Soldan for Saint Francis' promise looked,  
And, guards at certain passes having set,  
Gave charge that, if two Brothers passed that way  
Clad in Saint Francis' habit, they should be  
Brought to him straightway. At that time appeared  
Saint Francis to two Brothers, bidding them  
Make no delay, but to the Soldan go,  
And compass his salvation, even as he  
Had promised: the which Brothers instantly  
Set forth, and crossed the sea, and by those guards  
Were to the Soldan brought: and, seeing them,  
The Soldan said: 'Now know I of a truth  
That God hath sent His servants me to save,  
The which Saint Francis promised, as by God  
Revealed to him.' Receiving then the truth  
By the said Brothers taught, and being thus  
New-born in Christ, he of this sickness died,  
And through Saint Francis' prayers his soul was saved.

## XXIV

HOW SAINT FRANCIS HEALED A  
LEPER IN BODY AND SOUL

SAINT FRANCIS, true disciple of the Christ,  
While in this miserable life he lived,  
With all his strength did strive to follow Christ,  
The perfect Master: whence full oft befell,  
By divine operation, that of whom  
He healed the body, in the selfsame hour  
God healed the soul, e'en as of Christ we read.  
Wherefore not only did he gladly serve  
Folk leprous, but moreover had enjoined  
The Brothers of his Order through the world  
Going, or staying, leprous folk to serve  
Gladly for love of Christ, who for our sake  
Willed to be deemed a leper. It befell  
Once in a certain place, not far from where  
Saint Francis sojourned, that the Brothers served  
Sick folk and leprous in a hospital,  
Wherein a leper so impatient was,  
Froward, and petulant, that all men deemed,  
And deemed him truly, by the Devil possessed.  
For he so shamefully with words abused,  
And beat, who served him, yea, and what was worse,  
With such outrageous blasphemies reviled  
Christ and His Holy Mother, that by no means  
Might there be found, who serve him would, or could.

And though the wrongs and insults to themselves  
Full patiently the Brothers strove to bear,  
Merit of patience to increase thereby,  
Yet, since their consciences those wrongs to Christ,  
And to His Mother, brooked not to endure,  
At length resolved they to abandon him,  
Yet would not, till the thing was notified  
In order to Saint Francis. And so soon  
As they had made it known, Saint Francis came  
To this so fractious leper, and drew near,  
And did salute him, saying: ‘God give thee peace,  
My dearest Brother !’ And the leper replied  
Bitterly: ‘Nay, what peace to me from God,  
Who hath ta’en from me peace and every good,  
And made me foul and noisome utterly ?’  
Saint Francis said: ‘Have patience, little son,  
Since ills of body are given to us of God  
In this world for soul’s saving, seeing that they  
Are of great merit, when borne patiently.’  
Replied the sick man: ‘How can I endure  
In peace the pain that racks me, night and day ?  
Nor of my sickness am I racked alone,  
But those thy Brethren, whom thou gav’st to serve,  
Entreat me worse, nor serve not as they should.’  
Thereat, by revelation from on high,  
Saint Francis, knowing this leper was possessed  
By an ill spirit, gat him to his prayers,  
And earnestly made suit to God for him.  
And, his prayer ended, he returned, and said:  
‘Myself am fain to serve thee, little son,

Since with these others thou art ill-content.'  
Quoth the sick man : ' It liketh me, nathless  
What better than the rest canst thou ? ' Replied  
Saint Francis : ' I will do whate'er thou wouldest.'  
Quoth the sick man : ' I will from head to foot  
Thou wash me, seeing that so corrupt am I,  
That I myself endure not.' Then forthwith  
Saint Francis bade boil water, with sweet herbs  
A many, and stripped him, and began  
With his own hands to wash him, and meanwhile  
A Brother poured on water ; and behold !  
By divine virtue, and by miracle,  
Where with his holy hands Saint Francis touched,  
The leprosy departed, and the flesh  
Was healèd utterly. And, as to heal  
The flesh began, so too 'gan heal the soul :  
Wherefore, perceiving health new-born in him,  
Contrition sore the leper now 'gan feel,  
And penitence for his sins, and fell anon  
To bitterest weeping ; insomuch that, while  
His body was made clean of leprosy,  
By washing of the water, so from sin  
Was his soul cleansed by penitential tears.  
And now, both body and soul made wholly clean,  
Humbly did he confess his fault, and said  
In a loud voice lamenting : ' Woe is me !  
Worthy of hell am I for outrage done  
And insult to the Brothers, and toward God  
For mine impatience and blaspheming words.'  
And so for fifteen days in bitter plaints

For sin persévered he, and prayers to God  
For mercy, and full confession to the priest.  
And when so marked a miracle, as God  
Had by his hands performed, Saint Francis saw,  
Returning thanks to God, he parted thence,  
And 'gat him to a country-place far off ;  
Wishing in his humility to shun  
All worldly glory, and in every deed  
God's glory and honour, not his own, to seek.  
Soon, as God willed it, the said leper, healed  
In body and soul, did, after fifteen days  
Of penitence, sicken of a new plague, and, armed  
With holy church-rites, died in sanctity,  
And his soul passed to Paradise. And lo !  
For sign thereof, his spirit in the air  
Appeared unto Saint Francis, as he prayed,  
And said to him : 'Rememberest thou me ?'  
'Who art thou ?' quoth Saint Francis. He replied :  
'I am that leper, whom the blessed Christ  
Healed through thy merits, and to-day I pass  
To Paradise: wherefore to God and thee  
My thanks I render: blessed be thy soul  
And body, and blessed be thy words and deeds :  
For that by thee shall many souls be saved  
Throughout the world: and know there is no day  
When the holy Angels, and what Saints beside,  
Return not thanks to God for the blest fruits  
Gathered in divers regions of the world  
By thee and by thine Order: for which cause  
Be comforted, thank God, and still abide

100 HOW SAINT FRANCIS HEALED A LEPER

Beneath His benediction.' And, these words  
Spoken, anon he passed into the heaven,  
And therewithal Saint Francis did remain  
Much comforted.

Unto the praise of Christ.

## XXV

## HOW THREE ROBBERS WERE CONVERTED BY SAINT FRANCIS

ONCE, as Saint Francis through the region went  
Of Borgo San Sepolcro, and was now  
Passing a certain village, that had name  
Monte Casale, came to him a youth,  
Noble and delicately reared, who said :  
' Fain am I, father, of thy Brotherhood  
To be.' Saint Francis answered : ' Little son,  
Young art thou, noble, and delicately reared :  
Belike thou couldst not bear the poverty  
And roughness that is ours.' And he replied :  
' Are ye not men, my father, even as I ?  
What ye can bear, then, I, please God, shall bear.'  
And since this answer liked Saint Francis well,  
Within the Order he forthwith received,  
And blessed, and named him Brother Angelo,  
And with such grace this youth bestowed himself,  
That soon Saint Francis made him of the House  
Of Monte Casale Guardian. At that time  
Three famous robbers did the land infest,  
Who wrought much evil through the countryside :  
And one day, coming to the Brothers' House,  
They prayed the Guardian, Brother Angelo,  
Some food to give them : and the Guardian  
Replied on this wise, harshly chiding them :

'Robbers and cruel murderers, shame ye not  
To reave the toils of others ? Nay, but more !  
Barefaced and insolent ye would e'en devour  
The alms that on God's servants are bestowed :  
Unworthy are ye earth should bear your weight,  
Since man, nor God who made you, ye regard :  
Begone then, and affront our eyes no more !'  
So fuming, in high dudgeon off they went.  
And lo ! Saint Francis, who had gone forth, returned  
With wallet of bread and flask of wine, the which  
He had begged with his companion : and when now  
The Guardian told how he had driven them off,  
Saint Francis sharply chid him, saying therein  
He had borne him cruelly, for that 'sinful folk  
Better by sweetness are than harsh rebuke  
Brought back to God : whence God our Master saith—  
Whose gospel we have promised to obey—  
"They that be whole do no physician need,  
But the sick rather"; and that He had come  
Not righteous, nay, but sinful folk, to call  
Unto repentance ; wherefore many a time  
He ate with them. Since then thou hast herein  
'Gainst Charity and God's holy gospel wrought,  
By holy Obedience I command thee take  
Forthwith this wallet of bread which I have begged,  
And eke this flask of wine, and get thee gone,  
And diligently pursue o'er hill and vale,  
Until thou find them, and, when found, from me  
With all this bread present them, and this wine ;  
And kneel before them, and therewith confess

Humbly thy fault of cruelty, and so  
Entreat them, as from me, to sin no more,  
But fear God, nor offend their neighbour, which  
If they will do, I pledge me to provide  
For all their needs, and give them food and drink  
Continually: and when thou hast so said,  
Hither return right humbly.' Therewithal,  
While the said Guardian was gone forth to do  
His bidding, Saint Francis gat him to his prayers,  
Beseeching God those robbers' hearts to melt,  
And turn them unto penitence. Meanwhile  
The obedient Guardian, coming up with them,  
Gave them the bread and wine, nor left undone  
Aught that Saint Francis bade. And it pleased God,  
As of Saint Francis' alms those robber-folk  
Were eating, they 'gan say among themselves :  
' Alas, poor wretches ! what hard pains of hell  
Await us, who not only go about  
Robbing our neighbours, dealing blows and wounds,  
But likewise slaying, and none the less for deeds  
So ill and heinous feel no whit remorse  
Of conscience, nay, nor fear of God ! and see !  
This holy Brother, who hath come to us,  
For certain words the which he justly spake  
Against our wickedness, hath humbly owned  
His fault, and brought us bread and wine to boot,  
And from the holy Father's lips so large  
A promise ! These Brothers verily be Saints  
Of God, who merit Paradise ; and we  
Sons of perdition without end, who now

Merit the pains of hell, and day by day  
But add to our damnation : nor know we  
If for the sins wrought hitherto by us  
We may of God find mercy.' As one of them  
These and like words did speak, the other twain  
Said : ' Verily sooth thou speakest, but behold !  
What must we do ? ' ' Let us e'en go,' quoth he,  
' Unto Saint Francis : if he give us hope  
That for our sins we may God's mercy find,  
Do we whate'er he bids us, that our souls  
We may deliver from the pains of hell.'  
This counsel liked the others, so all the three  
Went to Saint Francis with one mind, and said :  
' For many heinous sins that we have done,  
Father, God's mercy we not think to find ;  
Nathless, if thou hast any hope that God  
Will take us to His mercy, we are here  
Fain to perform thy bidding, and with thee  
Do penance.' Then Saint Francis welcomed them  
In lovingkindness and in charity,  
With manifold examples comforting  
Their hearts, and of God's mercy made them sure,  
Yea, promised to obtain it them of God,  
Shewing them how God's mercy hath no bound,  
And, though our sins were boundless, yet the grace  
Of God is greater, and how the blessed Christ,  
As Gospel saith, and holy Apostle Paul,  
Came into this world, sinners to redeem.  
By the which words, and others like to these,  
Admonished, the three robbers did renounce

The devil and all his works, and were received  
Into the Order at Saint Francis' hand,  
And 'gan to do great penance : and twain of them  
Lived after their conversion a brief while,  
And passed to Paradise ; but the third survived,  
And, of his sins repenting, set himself  
To do such penance, that for fifteen years  
Continuously, save for the Lenten use,  
The which he kept in such wise as the rest,  
At other time, three days o' the week he fared  
On bread and water, going bare-foot still,  
One tunic on his back, and, Matins o'er,  
Slept never. About that time Saint Francis passed  
From out this miserable life. He then  
Having this penance many years fulfilled,  
Lo ! after Matins came to him one night  
Of sleep such strong desire, that by no means  
Might he refrain from slumber, or keep watch,  
As he was wont to do. And since from sleep  
Refrain he could not, no, nor pray, at last  
He gat him to repose, and suddenly,  
Soon as he laid his head down, he was rapt  
And borne in spirit to a great mountain-height,  
Where was a precipice exceeding deep,  
On this side and on that rocks torn and jagg'd,  
And broken boulders jutting from the rocks ;  
So that adown that precipice to peer  
Was fearsome gazing. And the Angel-form,  
The which did lead this Brother, pushed him on,  
And threw him down the precipice : and he,

Tumbling and bounding on from rock to rock,  
From boulder on to boulder, reached at last  
The bottom of that precipice piecemeal  
Mangled and shattered, as it seemed to him.  
And as in this sore plight on earth he lay,  
His leader thus bespake him : ‘ Get thee up,  
For a long journey thou hast yet to make.’  
Replied the Brother : ‘ An ill-advisèd man  
Thou seem’st, and cruel, who see’st me like to die  
Of the fall that hath thus shattered me, and yet  
Biddest me rise.’ Then came the Angel near,  
And with a touch healed perfectly his limbs,  
And made him sound. And, after, shewed he him  
A mighty plain full of sharp cutting stones,  
And thorns and briars, and said through all that plain  
He must pass bare-foot till he reached the end,  
Where a fierce furnace he espied, the which  
He needs must enter. When the Brother had passed  
O’er all that plain with anguish and sore hurt,  
‘ Get thee into this furnace,’ said to him  
The Angel, ‘ for needs must thou.’ He replied,  
‘ Alas ! how cruel a guide thou art to me  
Who seest me by this agonizing plain  
Brought nigh to death, and bidst me now for rest  
Enter yon blazing furnace ! ’ And he looked  
And in the furnace many devils saw  
With iron forks in hand, wherewith, since he  
Shirked entrance, they of a sudden thrust him in.  
And having now within the furnace passed,  
He looked about him, and saw one, had been

His godfather, on fire from head to foot:  
And he inquired: ‘Unhappy godfather,  
How cam’st thou hither?’ And he replied: ‘Go on  
A little further yet, and thou shalt find  
My wife, thy gossip, who will relate to thee  
The cause of our damnation.’ Thereupon  
The Brother went onward, till before his eyes  
Lo! the said gossip, wrapt in fire, and penned  
In a corn-bushel that was all aflame!  
And he inquired: ‘Unhappy gossip, say  
Wherefore to this fell torment art thou come?’  
‘Because in the great famine-time,’ quoth she,  
‘The which Saint Francis prophesied erewhile,  
I and my husband of the wheat and grain  
We sold did give false measure; wherefore I  
Penned in this bushel burn.’ Upon which word  
The Angel led this Brother, and thrust him forth  
From out the furnace, and then said to him:  
‘Gird thee a fearful journey to perform,  
The which thou needs must travel.’ And he spake  
Complaining bitterly: ‘O most cruel guide,  
Who hast no pity upon me! for thou seest  
That in this furnace I am all burnt up,  
And yet wouldest lead me by a perilous road  
And fearful!’ And thereat the Angel touched,  
And made him whole and strong. And after this  
He brought him to a bridge he might not cross  
Without great peril, seeing that it was frail,  
And narrow, and very slippery, and had  
No rail to flank it: and thereunder lapsed

A terrible river full of serpent-things,  
Dragons and scorpions, that sent up therefrom  
A stench most noisome ; and the Angel said :  
' Cross now this bridge, since cross it needs thou  
must.'

' How shall I skill to cross it,' he replied,  
' So that I fall not in this perilous flood ? '

The Angel said : ' Come after me, and set  
Thy feet where thou shalt see that I set mine,  
And so shalt thou cross well.' The Brother crossed  
Behind the Angel, as he had bidden him,  
To midmost of the bridge, and as he stood  
Thus at its midmost, forth the Angel flew,  
And left him, and to a great mountain-height  
Departed, from the said bridge far enow  
On the other side. And he marked well the place  
Whither had flown the Angel ; but, left thus,  
Without a guide, and gazing therebelow,  
He saw those terrible monsters standing forth,  
Heads above water, and with mouths agape,  
Ready to swallow him, if he fell. Thereat  
Such terror held him, that he wist no whit  
Or what to do, or say ; since turn him back  
He could not, nor go forward. Whereupon  
Seeing himself in strait so sore, that he  
None other refuge had, but God alone,  
He bowed him, and in both arms clasped the bridge,  
And with his whole heart, weeping, unto God  
Commended him, if peradventure He  
Of His most holy ruth might succour him.

And, the prayer done, him seemed that he began  
To put forth wings ; whereat with mighty joy  
He waited for their growing, that he might fly  
Beyond the bridge, whither the Angel flew.  
Then, after some time, in his strong desire  
To cross the bridge, he set himself to fly,  
But, since the wings were not yet large enow,  
Fell on the bridge, and off the feathers dropped.  
Wherefore once more he clasped the bridge, to God,  
As at the first, commanding him : and when  
His prayer was done, a second time he seemed  
To put forth wings, but once more waited not  
Their perfect growth, and so, before the time  
Essaying to fly, fell on the bridge again,  
And off the feathers dropped. And, seeing that he  
Had fallen by reason of the haste he had  
To fly before the time, he 'gan to speak  
Thus with himself : ' If I shall put forth wings  
A third time, of a surety I will wait  
Till they be grown so large that I can fly,  
Nor fall again.' And, thinking on this wise,  
He saw himself the third time put forth wings,  
And long he waited till they were full large ;  
And in this putting forth of wings once, twice,  
And thrice, it seemed to him he had waited more  
Than hundred years and fifty. And at last  
For the third time he rose to fly, and up  
With all his strength flew even to the place  
Where the Angel was : and at the palace-door  
Knocking, whereinto had the Angel flown,

The porter asked him : ‘ Who art thou, that hast  
Come hither ? ’ ‘ A Brother Minor I,’ quoth he.  
Then said the porter : ‘ Tarry, that I may bring  
Saint Francis, for to learn if thee he know.’  
And, while to fetch Saint Francis he was gone,  
He fell to gazing on the marvellous walls  
Of the said palace ; and these walls appeared  
Of such translucent brightness, that he saw  
The Choirs of Saints, and what was wrought within,  
Full clearly. And, as spell-bound thus he stood  
Gazing thereon, behold ! Saint Francis came,  
With Brother Bernard, and with Brother Giles ;  
And in Saint Francis’ train so vast a host  
Of Saints and saintly women, who his life  
Had followed, as nigh numberless appeared.  
And, drawing near, unto the porter spake  
Saint Francis : ‘ Let him enter, seeing that he  
Is of my Brothers.’ And, once entered in,  
Such sweetness felt he, that he clean forgot  
All he had suffered, as though it ne’er had been.  
And now Saint Francis, leading him within,  
Shewed him a many marvellous things, and thus  
At length bespake him : ‘ Thou must needs return  
Unto the world, my son, and there abide  
Seven days, wherein do thou prepare thyself  
With all devotion diligently ; for I  
After those seven days will come for thee,  
And with me thereupon shalt thou return  
Unto this dwelling of the blest.’ And lo !  
Saint Francis was in marvellous robe arrayed.

Embroidered o'er with stars right glorious ;  
And his five stigmata were as five stars  
For glory, and of such splendour, that the whole  
Palace they did illumine with their rays.  
And Brother Bernard had upon his head  
A crown of stars full beauteous to behold,  
And Brother Giles in wondrous light was decked ;  
And 'midst them many another Saint he knew,  
Whom in the world he ne'er had looked upon.  
So, of Saint Francis taking now his leave,  
Albeit full loth, returned he back to earth  
Waking ; and lo ! as to himself he came,  
And his own wits, the Brothers rang for Prime ;  
So that he had not save from Matin-hour  
Been of that vision holden until Prime,  
Albeit to him it had seemed many years.  
And, having all this vision point by point  
Told o'er, within the seven days he fell  
Sick of a fever ; then on the eighth day  
Saint Francis, as he had promised, came for him  
With a vast multitude of glorious Saints,  
And to the kingdom of the blissful ones  
Of life eternal did conduct his soul.

Unto the blessed Christ His praise. Amen.

## XXVI

HOW SAINT FRANCIS WENT TO  
BOLOGNA, AND CONVERTED TWO  
SCHOLARS BY HIS PREACHING

WHEN to Bologna city on a time  
Saint Francis came, the city-folk ran all  
Together for to see him ; and so dense  
The throng of people, that with much ado  
Scarce could they gain the Square : and when the  
Square  
Was now with men and women wholly filled,  
And eke with scholars, in their midst uprose  
Saint Francis, and 'gan preach what words soe'er  
The Holy Spirit taught him : and he preached  
Matters so wondrous, that it seemed to them  
There preached an Angel, rather than a man :  
Yea, and the heavenly words he spake appeared  
Like to keen arrows which did pierce their hearts  
Who heard him, that great multitudes of men  
And women-folk, as he so preached, were turned  
To penitence. And of this number were  
Two noble students from Ancona's March,  
Whereof one Pellegrino had to name,  
And the other Ruggieri : the which both,  
By divine inspiration touched at heart,  
Through the said preaching, to Saint Francis came,  
Saying their whole wish was to quit the world,

And become Brothers. Then Saint Francis, knowing  
By revelation from on high that these  
Were sent of God, and would the holy life  
Observe within the Order, when he saw  
How great their fervour, gladly welcomed them  
Saying: 'Thou, Pellegrino, from henceforth  
The lowly life shalt follow, and serve thou  
The Brethren, Ruggieri.' And e'en so  
It was: for Pellegrino would not come  
As Cleric, but lay Brother, though right learn'd,  
And master of canonic law; by which  
Humility such perfection he attained  
In holiness, that Brother Bernard even,  
Saint Francis' first-born, spake of him as one  
Of the most perfect Brothers in this world.  
Finally Brother Pellegrino passed  
From this life to the beatific life  
Nor without many miracles, or wrought  
Before his death, or after. Therewithal  
Did Brother Ruggieri faithfully  
And with devotion serve the Brotherhood  
In holiness and humbleness of life,  
And with Saint Francis to close friendship came;  
And many secrets unto him revealed  
Saint Francis. And, when now made Minister  
Of the Province of Ancona's March, long time  
In utmost peace, full wisely, held he sway.  
After some time, God suffered visit him  
A right sore tempting of his soul, that he  
In trouble and anguish sternly schooled himself

With fasts, and tears, and scourgings, night and day,  
Yet none the more could that temptation oust ;  
But many a time he was in deep despair,  
And deemed himself forsaken of God. And still  
Continuing desperate, for last remedy  
Unto Saint Francis he resolved to go,  
Thus reasoning : ‘ If with kindly countenance  
Saint Francis, as mine old familiar friend,  
Receive me, then shall I believe that God  
Will yet have pity upon me ; but, if not,  
’Twill be a sign I am forsaken of God.’  
So forth he fared, and to Saint Francis went,  
Who in the Bishop’s Palace at that time,  
Lay at Assisi, grievous sick. To him  
Was the said Brother’s whole temptation shewn  
By God, and his despair, and therewithal  
His purpose, and his coming. Whereupon  
Saint Francis straight for Brother Leo sent,  
And Brother Masseo, saying to them : ‘ Go forth,  
And meet upon the way my most dear Son  
And Brother, Ruggieri, and from me  
Embrace him and salute, and say to him  
That of all Brothers that are in the world  
In special love I hold him.’ So they went,  
And Brother Ruggieri on the way  
Found, and embraced him, and delivered all  
Saint Francis had enjoined them. Whereupon  
Was such deep consolation in his soul,  
And sweetness, that he seemed indeed as one  
Beside himself, and, rendering thanks to God

With his whole heart, went onward, and arrived  
Where lay Saint Francis sick. Who, when he heard  
That Brother Ruggieri now drew nigh,  
Albeit right ill at ease, no whit the less  
Uprose, and went to meet, and tenderly  
Embraced him, saying : ‘ My dearest little son  
And Brother, Ruggieri, among all  
The Brothers of the world in special love  
I hold thee.’ And, this said, he made the sign  
Of the most holy Cross upon his brow,  
And kissed him there, and, after, said to him :  
‘ My little son most dear, for thy great gain  
And merit hath God this trial thee allowed :  
But, of the said gain if thou wouldest no more,  
Then have it not.’ O wonderful ! for lo !  
Soon as Saint Francis spoke, forthwith the whole  
Temptation left him, even as he had ne’er  
In all his life felt it ; and he remained  
Fulfilled of comfort.

To the praise of God.

## XXVII

## HOW BROTHER BERNARD OF QUINTAVALLE WAS ENTRANCED FROM MATINS UNTIL NONES

WHAT grace full many a time God wrought in those Poor gospellers, who for God's love the world Abandoned, was in Brother Bernard found Of Quintavalle, who, when he had donned Saint Francis' habit, was oft rapt in God Through contemplation of celestial things. And, among other times, a time there came, When, for to hear Mass being in church, and all His mind in God uplifted, he became Through contemplation so absorbed in God— Ravished and rapt—that when the Body of Christ Was raised aloft, he nothing saw thereof, Nor kneeled, nor drew his hood back, as did all The others there, but, without blink of eye, Gazing thus fixedly, continued so From Matins until Nones, regarding naught: And, after Nones, come to himself, he went Crying in tones of wonder through the House: ' O Brothers, Brothers, Brothers ! there is none So great or noble in all this land, that, were Some glorious, gold-filled palace promised him, He would not gladly bear a sack of dung

Treasure to win so noble !' Even for this  
Celestial treasure, to God-lovers all  
Promised, was Brother Bernard foreordained,  
And was in thought so lifted up to God  
That fifteen years unceasingly he went  
Ever with heart and face upturned to heaven,  
Nor all that time his hunger quelled, albeit  
Of what was set before him he would eat  
A little : for he was wont to say, whereof  
A man not tasted, practised he therefrom  
No perfect abstinence : but true abstinence  
Is to be temperate in such things as are  
Sweet to the palate. Whereby he attained  
Such clarity and light of intellect,  
That even great Doctors flocked to him, to probe  
Deep and hard questions, or solve knotty points  
Of Scripture ; and with ease he made them clear.  
And, since his mind was wholly loosed and freed  
From earthly things, he, like the swallow, flew  
Upward through contemplation : whence one time  
For twenty days, once thirty, he remained  
Alone upon the loftiest mountain-tops,  
In meditation upon heavenly things.  
For which cause Brother Giles would say of him,  
That to none else of men was given this gift  
That unto Brother Bernard had been given  
Of Quintavalle, to wit, that, swallow-like,  
Upon the wing he fed : and many a time,  
For this most excellent grace he had of God,  
Saint Francis loved to talk with him by night

Or day ; whence sometimes they were night-long  
found

Together, rapt in God, within a wood,  
Where they had met, they twain, to speak of God,  
The ever, and for ever, blest. Amen.

## XXVIII

HOW THE DEVIL APPEARED TO  
BROTHER RUFFINO IN THE FORM  
OF CHRIST

BROTHER RUFFINO, of Assisi's folk  
One of the noblest, a right saintly man,  
Companion of Saint Francis, on a time  
Was by the Devil with his most rude assaults,  
Touching predestination, buffeted ;  
Whereby full heavy of soul he was and sad,  
For that the Devil put into his heart  
That he was damned, nor numbered among those  
To endless life predestined, and that all  
He did within the Order was but lost.  
And, this temptation ever day by day  
Continuing, for shame's sake he shewed it not  
Unto Saint Francis, nor nathless forbore  
His wonted orisons and fasts to keep :  
Wherewithal the Adversary anon 'gan add  
Sorrow to sorrow, and, over and above  
Strifes inward, 'gan beset him from without  
With lying phantoms. Wherefore on a time  
In the form of the Crucified he appeared to him,  
And said : ' O Brother Ruffino, wherefore thus  
Afflict thyself with penances and prayers,  
Seeing thou art not numbered among those  
To endless life predestined ? Well I wot,

Believe me, whom I have chosen and foreordained ;  
And, as for Peter Bernardone's son,  
Believe him not if he say contrary,  
Nor ask him of this matter ; since nor he  
Nor any else doth wot of it, but I,  
Who am the Son of God. Believe me then  
Thou art full surely numbered with the damned :  
Nor hath it pleased me make of mine elect  
Thy Father, Peter Bernardone's son ;  
Nay, neither him nor thee ; damned therewithal  
His father is, and duped who followeth him.'  
These words thus spoken, he suddenly disappeared ;  
And Brother Ruffino 'gan therewith to be  
So darkly overshadowed by the Prince  
Of darkness, that anon all faith and love  
He lost, which for Saint Francis he had had,  
Nor list he tell him aught of it. But lo !  
What to the holy Father was not told  
By Brother Ruffino, that the Holy Ghost  
Revealed to him : wherefore it came to pass  
That, when Saint Francis saw in spirit how great  
The peril of the said Brother was, he sent  
To call him Brother Masseo ; unto whom  
Quoth Brother Ruffino bitterly : ' What have I  
To do with Brother Francis ? ' Then, fulfilled  
With divine wisdom, Brother Masseo saw  
The trickery of the Devil, and said to him :  
' O Brother Ruffino, this then know'st thou not,  
That as God's Angel Brother Francis is,  
Who hath so many souls i' the world illumed,

Yea, from whom we the grace of God received ?  
Whence by all means I will thou come to him,  
For that I see full clearly thou art duped  
Of the Devil.' And Brother Ruffino, at this word,  
Arose, and to Saint Francis went, and when  
Saint Francis saw him coming from afar,  
' O Brother Ruffino,' he 'gan cry to him,  
' Thou naughty one, in whom hast thou believed ?'  
And, Brother Ruffino coming up to him,  
Saint Francis point by point recounted o'er  
His whole temptation by the Evil One,  
Inward or outward, shewing him full plain  
That he which had appeared to him was not  
Christ, but the Devil, and by no means must he  
Yield to his prompting ; ' but, when saith the Fiend :  
" Damned art thou," then make answer : " Ope thy  
mouth,  
And take this filth therein." And let this be  
Thy token he is the Evil One ; for when  
Thou thus shalt answer, he will straightway flee.  
Hereby too mayst thou know he was the Devil,  
In that thy heart he hardened to all good,  
Which is his proper office ; whereas Christ,  
The blessed, hardeneth ne'er the faithful heart,  
Nay, softeneth it, as by the Prophet's mouth  
He saith : " Your stone heart I will take away,  
And give you a heart of flesh." And when he saw  
How that Saint Francis thus in order told  
Both his temptation and the manner thereof,  
Pricked by his words, 'gan Brother Ruffino weep

Full loud, and at Saint Francis' feet to fall,  
And humbly own his fault in having hid  
This his temptation. Thus did he remain  
Consoled and strengthened by the admonishments  
Of the holy Father, and to better things  
Changed utterly. At the last Saint Francis said :  
‘ Go and confess thee, nor abate thy zeal,  
Or wonted prayers ; and of a surety know  
That this temptation shall to thy great gain  
And solace tend, as shortly thou shalt prove.’  
Then Brother Ruffino to his cell returned  
Within the wood ; and as with many tears  
He was a-praying, behold ! the Adversary  
In outward guise like unto God ! who said :  
‘ O Brother Ruffino, spake I not to thee  
“ Believe not Peter Bernardone’s son,  
And weary not thyself with tears and prayers,  
Since thou art damned ” ? What need to plague thee  
thus  
The while thou livest, and after death be damned ? ’  
And suddenly Brother Ruffino answered him :  
‘ Open thy mouth, and take this filth therein ’ :  
Whereat the Devil in wrath straight gat him gone,  
And with such storm and shaking of the rocks,  
Which from the mountain that soared hard at hand  
Came tumbling, that the hurly of those rocks  
Lasted full long, as they fell ruining down :  
And with so vast a crash, rolled each on each,  
Smote they together, that the nether plain  
Was all lit up with terrible gleams of fire.

And at the fearful uproar wrought thereby  
Saint Francis and his fellows from the House  
Came issuing in great wonder, to behold  
What this new thing might be. And to this day  
That mighty ruin of the rocks is seen.  
Then Brother Ruffino did full plain perceive  
It was the Devil had fooled him. Whereupon,  
Returning to Saint Francis, once again  
He cast him to the earth, and owned his fault ;  
And him Saint Francis with sweet words consoled,  
And sent him to his cell quite comforted ;  
Wherein as full devoutly he abode,  
Appeared the blessed Christ, and all his soul  
With love divine rekindled, saying to him :  
‘ In this thou hast done well, my son, that thou  
Believedst Brother Francis, seeing that he  
Who had distressed thee was the Devil, but I  
Am Christ, thy Master ; and, that thou mayst know  
Surely that I am Christ, this sign thereof  
I give thee : never, while thy life-days last,  
Shalt thou know sorrow or heart-heaviness.’  
And, with the word, Christ vanished, leaving him  
There with such joy and sweetness of the soul,  
And mind-uplifting, that by day and night  
He was absorbed and rapt in God. Withal  
From that time forth so strong he grew in grace  
And surety of salvation, that indeed  
He was changed wholly to another man,  
And would have passed both day and night in prayer  
And meditation upon things divine,

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Had the rest suffered it. And for this cause  
Saint Francis wont to say of him—to wit,  
Of Brother Ruffino—that he was indeed  
In this life canonized by Jesu Christ,  
Nor, save when present, would spare to call him Saint  
Ruffino, though yet living on the earth.

Unto the praise of Jesu Christ. Amen.

## XXIX

HOW SAINT FRANCIS BADE BROTHER  
RUFFINO PREACH NAKED, AND  
AFTER DID THE LIKE HIMSELF

Now the said Brother Ruffino was so far  
Through ceaseless contemplation lost in God,  
That as one senseless he became, and mute,  
And spake full seldom : therewithal nor grace  
To preach had he, nor eloquence of tongue.  
Nathless Saint Francis bade him on a time  
Go to Assisi, and preach unto the folk,  
As God inspired him. Thereupon replied  
Brother Ruffino : ' Reverend Father mine,  
Prithee forbear me this, and send me not,  
For that thou knowest I have no gift to preach,  
And am a simple, witless man.' Then said  
Saint Francis : ' Since thou not obey'st forthright,  
By holy Obedience I command thee now  
Strip to the waist, and to Assisi go,  
And, entering there a church, in thy bare skin  
Preach to the people.' Upon this behest,  
Brother Ruffino doffed his gear, and so  
Went to Assisi, and, entering a church,  
Did reverence to the altar, and anon  
Clomb to the pulpit, and essayed to preach :  
Whereat the children and the men 'gan laugh,  
And say among themselves : ' These fellows, see,

Practise such penances, that they become  
Fools, and beside themselves.' In the meantime  
Saint Francis of the prompt obedience shewn  
By Brother Ruffino—mong Assisi's folk  
One of the noblest-born—bethinking him,  
And of the harsh behest himself had given,  
'Gan now take blame unto himself, and say :  
'From whence hast thou such arrogance, O son  
Of Peter Bernardone, thou vile wretch,  
Thus to bid Brother Ruffino, being one  
Of the most noble of Assisi's folk,  
Go preach to the people naked, like a fool ?  
By God, thou shalt in thine own person prove  
The task thou lay'st on others.' And suddenly  
In fervour of soul he likewise doffed his clothes,  
And went to Assisi, and along with him  
Took Brother Leo, his own garb to bear,  
And Brother Ruffino's. When the Assisan folk  
Saw him like-fashioned, they made mock of him,  
Deeming both him and Brother Ruffino crazed  
By o'ermuch penance. And Saint Francis passed  
Within the church, as Brother Ruffino now  
These words was preaching: 'Flee the world, belovèd,  
And let go sin ; render to all their dues,  
An ye would 'scape from hell'; keep God's commands,  
God and your neighbour loving, would ye go  
To heaven ; and if heaven's kingdom ye would win,  
Do penance.' Then Saint Francis, all unclad,  
Clomb to the pulpit, and began to preach  
In wise so wondrous of contempt o' the world,

Of holy penitence, willing poverty,  
And fervent longing for the realm of heaven,  
Yea, of the nakedness and shame withal  
Of the passion of Christ Jesu, that all those  
Who heard that preaching 'gan to weep right sore,  
With such devoutness and contrition of heart  
As might not be believed: nor only there,  
But throughout all Assisi, on that day,  
There was such weeping for the passion of God,  
As like thereto was never. And the folk  
Being in such wise by Saint Francis' act,  
And Brother Ruffino's, cheered and edified,  
Anon Saint Francis donned his gear again,  
And Brother Ruffino his: and, thus re-clad,  
Back to the House of Portiuncula  
Returned they, glorifying and praising God,  
Who had vouchsafed them grace, through scorn of self  
Themselves to conquer, and God's little sheep  
By good ensample edify, and shew  
How profitable a thing to spurn the world.  
Yea, and so waxed to-them-ward on that day  
The people's worship, that who might but touch  
Their garments' hem did deem himself thereby  
Blessèd.

Unto the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XXX

HOW SAINT FRANCIS KNEW THE  
VIRTUES AND THE FRAILTIES  
OF HIS COMPANIONS

As saith in the Gospel our Lord Jesu Christ :  
 ‘ I know my sheep, and eke am known of Mine,’  
 E’en so the holy Francis, Father blest,  
 Like a good shepherd, every merit knew  
 And grace of his companions, as by God  
 Revealed to him, nor less their faults discerned ;  
 And therefore skilled he to provide for all  
 Best remedies—to wit, humbling the proud,  
 And lifting up the lowly, chiding vice,  
 And praising virtue : even as one reads  
 Touching the revelations made to him  
 Of his first family ; among which we find  
 That while Saint Francis in a certain House  
 With the said family held discourse of God—  
 Brother Ruffino being at that discourse  
 Not present with them, for that he abode  
 Within the wood in meditation rapt—  
 They still continuing in discourse of God,  
 Lo ! Brother Ruffino issued from the wood,  
 And passed some distance from them. Whereupon  
 Saint Francis, seeing him, to his comrades turned,  
 And asked them saying : ‘ Whom deem ye in your  
 hearts

The holiest soul God hath i' the world to-day ?' And, these replying they deemed it was his own, Saint Francis said to them : ' Brothers belov'd, I verily am the vilest man God hath In this world : but behold ye now where comes Brother Ruffino issuing from the wood ? Lo ! it hath been revealed to me of God, His soul is one of the three holiest souls God hath in this world : and I say to you, And do avouch the same, I would not stick To call him Saint Ruffino while he lives, Seeing his soul hath been confirmed in grace, And sanctified in heaven, and canonized By my Lord Jesu Christ.' These words nathless, Brother Ruffino being by, ne'er spake Saint Francis. In like manner he discerned The frailties of the Brothers : so he read Brother Elias clearly, many a time Rebuking him for arrogance, and likewise To Brother John o' the Chapel prophesied That by the throat himself should hang himself ; And so too told that Brother how he saw The devil that gripped him by the throat, when chid For disobedience : beside many more, Whose virtues and defects he clearly knew, As was by God revealed to him. Amen.

## XXXI

HOW BROTHER MASSEO OBTAINED  
THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

THE first companions of Saint Francis strove  
With all their strength to be in earthly things  
Full poor, and rich in virtues, whereby man  
To the true heavenly riches doth attain  
That are eternal. Now there came a day,  
Being met to speak of God, that one of them  
Did this example give : ‘ A mighty friend  
Of God there was, who had great grace of life  
In act and contemplation, and withal  
Was of such wondrous deep humility,  
That of all sinners himself deemed he chief :  
The which humility did sanctify  
And strengthen him in grace, still making him  
To grow in virtue and the gifts of God,  
Nor ever into sinful act let fall.’  
When Brother Masseo of humility  
Heard tell such wondrous matters, witting well  
It was the treasure of eternal life,  
Such love and longing gan to fire his soul  
For this same lowly virtue, that anon,  
In ardour deep raising his face to heaven,  
He vowed and straitly purposed nevermore  
To joy in this world till within his soul  
He felt that virtue perfectly. Thenceforth

Continued he nigh prisoned in his cell,  
Wearing the flesh down with fasts, vigils, prayers,  
And loud lamentings in the face of God,  
To win from Him that virtue, lacking which  
Worthy of hell he deemed him, and wherewith  
Yon friend of God, of whom he had heard tell,  
Was dowered so richly. And, in this desire  
For many days continuing, came a day  
When Brother Masseo passed within the wood  
In fervour of soul, and weeping walked therethrough  
With sighs and cries to God of warm desire,  
This heavenly virtue craving to obtain.  
And, since God gladly hearkeneth the prayers  
Of contrite hearts and lowly, as he prayed  
There came a voice from heaven which called him  
twice :  
‘ Brother Masseo, Brother Masseo ! ’ Then  
Knowing in spirit it was the voice of Christ,  
‘ My Lord, my Lord ! ’ he answered : and Christspake :  
‘ What wilt thou give to have this grace of Me ? ’  
And Brother Masseo answered : ‘ O my Lord,  
I would e’en give the eyes from out my head.’  
And Christ spake to him : ‘ I will thou have the grace,  
And thine eyes also.’ And, this said, the voice  
Vanished, and Brother Masseo there remained  
Filled with such virtue of humility—  
The grace he longed for—and the light of God,  
That he was ever jubilant from that hour,  
And oft, when praying, would shape his joy to sound  
Like to a dove’s soft cooing, oo, oo, oo,

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And with glad countenance and joyful heart  
Remain in contemplation : and therewith,  
Being most humble grown, he deemed himself  
The least of all men in the world. And when  
By Brother James of Fallerone asked  
Wherefore his joyful tune he never changed,  
Full blithely he replied that whoso found  
All good in one thing needed not to change  
**His tune.**

Unto the praise of God. Amen.

## XXXII

HOW SAINT CLARE BLEST THE  
LOAVES

SAINT CLARE, devoted follower of Christ's Cross,  
And of Saint Francis a renownèd plant,  
Was of such sanctity, that not alone  
Bishops and Cardinals, but the Pope himself  
Right earnestly desired to see and hear,  
And oft in person went to visit, her.  
And one time, among other times, he came  
Unto the Convent, for to hear her speak  
Of heavenly things divine : and, being thus  
Together met in holy communing,  
Saint Clare meanwhile bade ready spread the board,  
And set the bread thereon, that it might be  
Blest of the Holy Father. Wherefore now,  
Soon as their ghostly talk had end, Saint Clare  
On bended knee, with utmost reverence,  
Besought that it might please him bless the bread  
Set thus upon the table. Whereunto  
Replied the Holy Father : ' Sister Clare,  
Most faithful daughter, I desire that thou  
Do bless this bread, and make thereon the sign  
Of the Cross of God, whereto thou'rt wholly given.'  
' Pardon, Most Holy Father,' quoth Saint Clare,  
' For well were I deserving utmost blame,  
Who but a worthless woman am, should I

In presence of God's Vicar, dare pronounce  
Such blessing.' And the Pope replied : ' That this  
Be not imputed to presumptuous thought,  
But merit of Obedience, I command  
By holy Obedience that upon these loaves  
Thou make the said sign of the holy Cross,  
And in God's name do bless them.' Thereupon  
Saint Clare, as daughter of Obedience true,  
Devoutly blessed the loaves, and made withal  
The sign of the holy Cross. O wondrous thing !  
Forthwith on all those loaves, right fair inwrought,  
The sign o' the Cross appeared : then some thereof  
Were eaten, some, the miracle to mark,  
Put by. And when the Holy Father saw  
That miracle, of the said bread he took,  
And, rendering thanks to God, and from Saint Clare  
With benediction parting, went his way.  
At that time in the Convent, with Saint Clare,  
Her mother Sister Ortolana dwelt,  
And Sister Agnes, her own sister—both  
Full of good works and of the Holy Ghost—  
With many another saintly nun ; to whom  
Saint Francis sent sick persons not a few ;  
And, one and all, with prayers and with the sign  
O' the Cross they healed them.

To Christ's praise. Amen.

## XXXIII

HOW SAINT LOUIS WENT TO VISIT  
BROTHER GILES

SAINT LOUIS, King of France, from shrine to shrine  
Went through the world on pilgrimage, and when  
He heard tell of the passing sanctity  
Of Brother Giles, the which had been among  
Saint Francis' first companions, he resolved  
Wholly and set his heart to visit him  
In person. Wherefore to Perugia,  
Where Brother Giles then sojourned, forth he fared,  
And, coming to the Brothers' Convent-door  
As a poor unknown pilgrim, and with few  
Companions, he inquired right urgently  
For Brother Giles, nor told the porter aught  
Of who it was inquired. The porter went  
And said to Brother Giles that at the door  
There was a pilgrim who inquired for him :  
And lo ! it was revealed to him of God  
In spirit to know it was the King of France :  
Whereat on a sudden, with great ardour fired,  
He issued from his cell, and ran to the door :  
And without further questioning, albeit  
Ne'er seen of one another, down they knelt  
In great devotion, and, each clasping each,  
Kissed as familiarly as they had been  
Long-linked in utmost friendship : for all that,

No word spake one to other, but thus embraced  
Continued, with these signs of tender love,  
In silence. And when now for a great space  
In the said manner they had so remained  
Without word spoken, they parted each from each,  
And forth Saint Louis upon his journey fared,  
And Brother Giles returned him to his cell.  
And when Saint Louis the King had gone his way,  
A certain Brother of his companion asked  
Who it had been that was so long time locked  
In Brother Giles' embrace : and he replied  
That it was Louis King of France had come  
To look on Brother Giles. And when this word  
He to the others told, sore vexed were they  
That Brother Giles had said no word to him :  
And, hereat murmuring, they bespake him thus :  
' O Brother Giles, why wert thou such a churl  
As unto king so excellent, who came  
From France to look on thee, and from thy lips  
Hear some good word, to say no word at all ? '  
Made answer Brother Giles : ' Brothers most dear,  
Marvel not therefore, since nor I to him,  
Nor he to me, had power to speak a word ;  
For long as we were thus together clasped,  
The light of heavenly wisdom revealed plain  
His heart to me, and mine to him, and so  
By divine operation gazing thus  
Each into other's heart, we better knew  
What I to him, and he to me, would say,  
Than if by word of mouth we had uttered it,

Yea, and with greater solace, than if that,  
Which in our heart we felt, we had in word  
Unfolded, through default of human speech  
Which may not the hid mysteries of God  
Shew clearly forth, and would have wrought in us  
Rather discomfort than encouragement.  
Wherfore with wondrous solace, wot ye well,  
The king departed.'

To Christ's praise. Amen.

## XXXIV

## HOW SAINT CLARE WAS MIRACULOUSLY CARRIED OF ANGELS TO THE CHURCH OF SAINT FRANCIS

SAINT CLARE was on a time so grievous sick  
That to the church she might by no means win  
To say the Office with the other Nuns :  
And when the feast o' the birth of Christ was toward,  
And all the Sisters else to Matins hied,  
She remained sole abed, and ill-content  
That with the rest she might not win to share  
That ghostly solace. But Jesu Christ, her spouse,  
Loth that she thus be left disconsolate,  
Made her miraculously to be borne  
Of Angels to Saint Francis' church, and there  
At Matin-Office and at midnight-Mass  
Be present to the close, and, more than this,  
Receive the blest Communion, and anon  
Caused her be carried to her couch again.  
And when unto Saint Clare the Nuns returned,  
The Holy Office at Saint Damian's done,  
They said to her : ' O Mother, Sister Clare,  
What wondrous consolation hath been ours  
On this, Christ's holy birth-night ! Would to God  
He had vouchsafed thee to be there with us ! '  
Whereto Saint Clare made answer : ' Praise and thanks  
Unto my Lord the blessed Jesu Christ,

Sisters and daughters mine most dear, I give,  
For that with utmost solace to my soul  
I have had part in each solemnity  
Of this most holy night, and greater things  
Than ye had part in, through my Father's aid,  
Saint Francis, and the grace of God ; for I  
In holy Father Francis' church have been,  
And with mine own ears, both of body and mind,  
Have all the singing heard, and eke the sound  
Of organs therein made, and have myself  
Received the blest Communion. Then rejoice  
For this high favour done to me, and give  
Thanks unto Jesu Christ our Lord.' Amen.

## XXXV

HOW BROTHER LEO HAD A VISION,  
WHICH WAS INTERPRETED BY  
SAINT FRANCIS

WHENAS Saint Francis once lay grievous sick,  
And Brother Leo was serving him, behold !  
The aforesaid Brother Leo, being at prayer  
Nigh to Saint Francis, from himself was rapt  
In Jesu Christ, and borne in spirit away  
To a mighty river, headlong-swift, and wide.  
And, standing to behold who passed, he saw  
Some certain Brothers, with burdens on their backs,  
Enter that river, the which were suddenly  
Down-beaten by the force o' the flood, and drowned :  
Others there were who won a third part o'er,  
Some e'en to midmost of the stream, and some  
Well nigh to the other side : who, one and all,  
Through the flood's force, and bearing on their backs  
Those burdens, were at last o'erthrown and drowned.  
And Brother Leo had mighty ruth for them,  
Beholding : and on a sudden, as he stood thus,  
Lo ! a great multitude of Brothers came,  
Without one burden or any weight, in whom  
Shone forth the light of holy poverty.  
These, entering, without peril passed the flood :  
And Brother Leo, having all beheld,  
Came to himself. Saint Francis hereupon

Perceiving in spirit that Brother Leo had seen  
A vision, called him to his side and asked  
What he had seen : to whom when point by point  
This Brother Leo had told the vision o'er,  
Saint Francis said : ‘ That thou hast seen is true,  
The mighty river is this world : therewithal  
The Brothers drowned in the river, these are they  
Their gospel-vows who followed not, in chief  
As touching deepest poverty : but they,  
Who without peril crossed, those Brothers are  
The which no earthly and no carnal thing  
Sought or possessed in this world, but, of food  
And raiment having merely the bare mean,  
Follow Christ naked on the Cross, and are  
Contented ; and the burden and sweet yoke  
Of Christ and holy Obedience these do bear  
Willing and fain, and from the body's life  
Win hence an easy passage unto life  
Eternal.’

To the praise of God. Amen.

## XXXVI

HOW A RICH AND COURTEOUS  
KNIGHT ENTERTAINED SAINT  
FRANCIS, AND AFTERWARDS  
JOINED THE ORDER

SAINT FRANCIS, thrall of God, coming one eve  
Late to the house of a great nobleman  
And mighty, was received and lodged of him,  
Both he and his companion, as they had been  
Angels of Paradise, with uttermost  
Of courtesy and devotion : for which cause  
Saint Francis mightily set his love upon him,  
Seeing that as they passed within the house  
He had embraced them, and full friendly kissed,  
And then had washed, and wiped, and kissed their feet  
Humbly, and kindled a great fire, and made  
Ready the board with divers goodly meats,  
And with glad countenance, the while he ate,  
Served them unceasingly. Anon, when now  
Saint Francis had with his companion supped,  
Outspake this nobleman : ‘ Father, behold !  
To you myself I offer, and of mine  
What things soe’er ye need : and, need ye ever  
Tunic, or cloak, or any single thing,  
Buy it, and I will pay you ; and take note  
That ready am I to furnish all your needs,  
Since by God’s grace I can ; for I abound

In every earthly blessing ; therefore too,  
For love of God who gave me them, right fain  
Am I to benefit His poor.' Whereat  
Saint Francis, seeing his so great courtesy  
And kindness, and large offerings, did conceive  
Such love for the man, that, when he parted thence,  
He strode along, to his companion saying :  
' This nobleman would of a surety be  
Good for our fellowship, who is toward God  
Of gratitude so mindful, and so kind  
And courteous to his neighbour and the poor.  
Know, Brother mine most dear, that courtesy  
Is of God's attributes, who sun and shower  
To just and unjust courteously doth give :  
Yea, courtesy is sister's self indeed  
To charity, which keepeth love alive  
And quencheth hate. And seeing that I have marked  
In this good man a virtue so divine,  
Him would I gladly for companion have :  
I will then we one day return to him,  
If haply God may touch his heart to wish  
Go with us in God's service : and meanwhile  
Pray we that God may plant within his soul  
The said desire, and give him grace withal  
To bring it to effect.' O wondrous thing !  
Within few days after Saint Francis' prayer,  
Into the heart of the said nobleman.  
God sent the said desire, and therewithal  
Saint Francis spake to his companion, saying :  
' Hie we, my Brother, to yon courteous man,

For certain hope have I in God that he,  
Being so courteous touching things of time,  
Will yield himself unto our company.'  
So forth they went, and to his house drew near.  
Then to his fellow thus Saint Francis spake :  
' Abide we here a little, for I would first  
Pray God to make our journey prosperous,  
And that this noble prey, the which we think  
To pluck from the world, poor weaklings that we be,  
He may vouchsafe to yield us through the worth  
Of His most holy passion.' And, this said,  
He fell to praying in a place from whence  
By the said courteous man he might be seen.  
Whereat, as God willed, the said nobleman.  
Looking to this side and to that, beheld  
Saint Francis in devoutest prayer to God,  
Who with a great light, as he prayed, appeared  
And stood before him ; and, God standing thus,  
He saw Saint Francis a good space from earth  
Raised bodily ; by the which he was so touched,  
Inspired of God to leave the world behind,  
That from his palace he straight gat him forth,  
And to Saint Francis ran in fervour of soul,  
And coming to him thus in act of prayer  
Kneeled at his feet, and with great earnestness  
Prayed him devoutly with himself vouchsafe  
Receive him to do penance. Whereupon  
Saint Francis, seeing his prayer was heard of God,  
And that this nobleman right urgently  
Asked that himself desired, anon uprose

In fervour and joy of spirit, and embraced  
And kissed him, with devoutest thanks to God,  
The which had added to his company  
A Knight so perfect. And this nobleman  
Said to Saint Francis : ‘ What dost bid me do,  
My Father ? here am I at thy behest  
Ready to give my substance to the poor,  
And follow Christ with thee, untrammelled thus  
Of all things earthly.’ And e’en so he did ;  
For, by Saint Francis’ counsel and command,  
Distributing all his goods among the poor,  
He came within the Order, and lived on  
In utmost penitence, sanctity of life,  
And holy conversation, and at length  
Life ended, to the glory of the blest  
Departed.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XXXVII

HOW IT WAS REVEALED TO SAINT  
FRANCIS THAT BROTHER ELIAS  
WAS DAMNED, AND THE SEQUEL  
THEREOF

WHENAS Saint Francis in the selfsame House  
With Brother Elias sojourned on a time,  
It was of God unto Saint Francis shewn  
That damned was Brother Elias, and that he  
Would from the Order fall away, and die  
At last outside the Order : for which cause  
Saint Francis such mislike for him conceived,  
That he nor spake nor talked with him ; and, if  
E'er chanced that Brother Elias toward him drew,  
He turned aside, and went some other way,  
Thereby to 'scape the encounter ; in such wise  
That Brother Elias 'gan perceive and know  
Saint Francis had mislike for him ; whereof  
Wishing to learn the reason, he one day  
Approached Saint Francis, for to speak with him ;  
And when Saint Francis would have shunned him, he  
Held him perforce in courteous wise, and 'gan  
Discreetly pray him to make known the cause  
Why he so shunned his speech and company.  
Saint Francis answered him : ' The cause is this,  
That God hath shewn me how that for thy sins  
Thou wilt from the Order fall away, and die

Outside the Order ; this too hath God shewn,  
That thou art damned.' Made answer, hearing it,  
Brother Elias : ' Reverend Father mine,  
Prithee for God's love shun me not for this,  
Nor drive me from thee, but as shepherd good  
And as God's scholar, seek and save the sheep,  
Which, an thou help not, perisheth ; and, if  
It may be, beseech God for me revoke  
The doom of my damnation ; for one finds  
It written that God doth let revoke His doom,  
So mend his sin the sinner : and in thy prayers  
Such faith is mine, that were I in mid-hell,  
And thou mad'st prayer to God for me, I should  
Some comfort feel ; wherefore, again I pray,  
Commend me, sinful as I am, to God,  
Who came for to save sinners, that He may  
Receive me to His mercy.' Thus with tears  
And deep devotion Brother Elias spake :  
Wherat Saint Francis, with a father's ruth,  
Promised to pray God for him, and so did.  
And, full devoutly praying for him to God,  
He knew by revelation that his prayer  
Was heard of God, and Brother Elias' doom,  
As touching his damnation, done away,  
Nor would his soul be damned at last ; nathless  
That from the Order he full sure would go,  
And die outside the Order ; which so came  
To pass : for Frederick, King of Sicily,  
Against the Church rebelling, and of the Pope  
Being excommunicate, with whosoe'er

Had lent him aid or counsel, it befell  
That the said Brother Elias, who was deemed  
One of the wisest of earth's folk, at suit  
Of the said King Frederick, to his party clave,  
And so became a rebel against the Church,  
And recreant to his Order ; for which cause  
He by the Pope was excommunicate,  
And of the habit of Saint Francis reft.  
And, being thus excommunicate, he fell  
Sore sick ; and a lay Brother, who had stayed  
Within the Order, and was a man of good  
And holy conversation, having heard  
Of the said sickness, came to visit him,  
And, among other things, bespake him thus :  
' Sorely it grieves me, Brother mine most dear,  
That thou, being excommunicate and thrust  
Forth from the Order, in this plight should'st die :  
But, an some mode or means thou seest, by which  
To pluck thee from this peril, every toil  
Will I bear gladly.' Brother Elias said :  
' No means see I, my Brother, save this alone,  
That to the Pope thou hie thee, and for love  
Of God, and of Saint Francis, thrall of God,  
By whose admonishment I left the world,  
Pray him absolve me from the Church's ban,  
The holy garb restore me.' Willingly  
The Brother said would he that toil bestow  
For his salvation, so took leave of him,  
And hied him to the Holy Father's feet,  
Praying him humbly grant his Brother grace

For God's love and Saint Francis'. And the Pope,  
As God willed, suffered him return, and eke,  
If Brother Elias yet alive he found,  
On his behalf absolve him, and give back  
The habit. Whereat, right gladly setting forth,  
To Brother Elias he returned full fast,  
And living found him, but at point to die,  
So from the ban absolved, and to the garb  
Restored him : and, from this life passing forth,  
Through merit of Saint Francis and his prayers,  
Wherein of old he had such mighty hope,  
The soul of Brother Elias earned the wage  
Of mercy.

To the praise of God. Amen.

## XXXVIII

HOW SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA  
SO PREACHED THAT HE SEEMED  
TO MEN OF DIVERS NATIONS TO  
BE SPEAKING IN THEIR OWN  
TONGUE

THAT wondrous vessel of the Holy Ghost,  
Saint Anthony of Padua, being one  
Of these disciples and companions erst  
Called of Saint Francis, whom Saint Francis wont  
To name his bishop, in the Consistory  
Once preached before the Pope and Cardinals ;  
In which Consistory were gathered men  
Of divers nations, to wit, Latins, Greeks,  
French, Germans, English, Slavs, and other tongues  
O' the world a many ; and, by the Holy Ghost  
Enkindled, with such subtlety and power,  
So clearly and devoutly set he forth  
God's Word, and with such learning, that all they  
Of the Consistory, though of divers tongues,  
Distinctly understood him, word by word,  
As if in their own several tongues he spake.  
Whereat were all astonished, for seemed to them  
Here wrought afresh that old-world miracle  
Of the Apostles on day of Pentecost,  
Who by the Holy Spirit's power did speak  
In every tongue : and marvelling they said

One to another : ‘ Is not he of Spain,  
Who preacheth ? How, then, hear we from his lips  
Of all our lands the language ? ’ And the Pope,  
Likewise in wonder pondering on the depth  
Of that he spake, said : ‘ Verily this man  
Is Ark of the Testament, and armoury  
Of Holy Scripture.’

To God’s praise. Amen.

## XXXIX

HOW SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA  
PREACHED TO THE FISHES

THE blessed Christ, willing to shew how great  
The holiness of His most faithful thrall  
Saint Anthony of Padua, and how  
His preaching and pure doctrine even of beasts,  
That lack discourse of reason, might be heard  
Devoutly, by the fishes did reprove  
Once among other times the foolishness  
Of infidels and heretics, as erst  
In the Old Testament by an ass's mouth  
The witlessness of Balaam He reproved.  
Saint Anthony then, being on a time  
At Rimini, where was a great multitude  
Of heretics, to the light of the true faith  
Wishing to lead them, and the way of truth,  
Preached and disputed with them mightily  
Of Holy Scripture and the faith of Christ:  
But they not only heeded not his words,  
But even, as men stiff-necked and obdurate,  
Would not so much as hear him. Whence befell  
By divine inspiration on a day  
Saint Anthony gat him to a river's mouth  
Hard by the sea, and there upon the bank  
Took stand 'twixt sea and river, and in God's name,  
As doth a preacher, to the fish 'gan speak:

' Hear ye the word of God, ye fish of sea  
And river, since unbelieving heretics  
Will none of it.' Scarce had he spoke the word,  
When up the sea-bank suddenly came to him  
So large a multitude of fish, great, small,  
Or midway-fashioned, that in all that sea,  
And in that river, was ne'er the like beheld  
For multitude ; and all upreared their heads  
From out the water, and attentive stayed  
In utter stillness, tame, and orderly :  
For first and nearest to the margin stood  
The lesser fish, then those 'twixt large and small,  
And hindmost, where more deep the water was,  
Those that were greater. And when thus the fish  
Were in due order ranged, Saint Anthony  
On this wise solemnly 'gan preach to them :  
' O fish, my brothers, beholden are ye much  
To render thanks, so far as ye have skill,  
To our Creator, who hath given to you  
So noble an element wherein to dwell,  
That ye have choice of salty wave or sweet,  
As liketh you ; and many a hiding-place  
To shun the tempest hath He given withal,  
And a transparent element and clear,  
And food to live by : courteous and benign  
Is God your Maker, who created you,  
And, bidding you increase and multiply,  
Gave you His blessing : afterward when came  
The general flood, and all the beasts were dying,  
You only did God scathless keep. And next,

That ye might dart at pleasure to and fro,  
Fins hath He given you. Unto you the grace,  
By God's command was granted, to preserve  
The Prophet Jonah, and after the third day  
To cast him up on shore alive and whole.  
Ye for your Lord, Christ Jesu, did provide  
The tribute-money, which He, as a poor man,  
Had not wherewith to pay. Ye were the food  
Of Jesu Christ, the eternal King, before  
He rose, and after, by a wondrous mystery :  
For all which things behoden are ye much  
To give God praise and blessing, who on you  
More than on other creatures hath bestowed  
His benefits.' At these and the like words,  
And admonitions of Saint Anthony,  
The fish began to ope their mouths, and bow  
Their heads down, and with these and other signs  
Of reverence, to the utmost of their power,  
Give praise to God. Whereat Saint Anthony,  
Seeing such reverence by the fishes given  
To their Creator, God, waxed glad of soul,  
And in a loud voice said : ' Blessed be God  
Eternal, since the fish more honour Him  
Than human heretics, and better heed  
Give creatures that lack reason to His word  
Than men-folk who believe not.' And the more  
Saint Anthony did preach, the greater grew  
The multitude of fishes, and of these  
None from the place, that he had taken, stirred.  
Unto this miracle the city-folk

'Gan hie them ; and of those who thither drew  
Were numbered e'en the aforesaid heretics ;  
Who, seeing a miracle so marvellous,  
Not to be gainsaid, pricked at heart, did all  
Down-cast them at his feet, to hear the word  
Spoke by Saint Anthony. And Saint Anthony  
Touching the Catholic faith 'gan preach to them,  
And preached so nobly that those heretics  
He one and all converted, turning them  
To the true faith of Christ : and all, who erst  
Were faithful, in great joyfulness abode  
Solaced, and strengthened in their holy faith.  
Then, bidding the fish go, Saint Anthony  
Gave them God's blessing ; and all went their way  
With marvellous signs of gladness, and likewise  
The people. Afterward Saint Anthony  
Abode in Rimini for many days,  
Preaching and reaping of the souls of men  
Much ghostly harvest.

To the praise of Christ.

## XL

HOW BROTHER SIMON FREED FROM  
TEMPTATION A CERTAIN NOVICE  
OF SAN SEVERINO

ABOUT the time when first the Order sprang,  
In the lifetime of Saint Francis, it befell  
There came to the Order an Assisan youth,  
Hight Brother Simon, the which was of God  
Adorned and dowered with such surpassing grace  
And meditative holiness of mind,  
That his whole life a mirror was indeed  
Of sanctity, as I have heard from those  
Who were long with him. Right seldom was he seen  
Outside his cell, and, if at any time  
Found with the Brothers, would still speak of God.  
Ne'er was he schooled in grammar ; and nathless  
His talk of God and eke of prayer to Christ  
Was so profound and lofty, that his words  
Seemed supernatural words ; whence, having gone  
Into the wood one eve with Brother James  
Of Massa for to speak of God, the while  
In sweetest wise of love divine he spake,  
They in their parley did outwatch the night ;  
Yet in the morning seemed they to have been  
No more than time the briefest, as to me  
The aforesaid Brother James recounted it.  
Now the said Brother Simon did receive

Such joy and sweetness of the Holy Ghost  
From these divine illuminings of God  
And rapturous visitations, that full oft,  
Ware of their coming, he laid him on his bed,  
Since that sweet calm, the Holy Spirit wrought,  
Required of him not only rest of soul,  
But even of body ; and in such visitings  
From heaven he was oft rapt in God, and grew  
Wholly insensible to things of time.

Once therefore, being on this wise rapt in God,  
And to the world insensible, he burned  
Inward with love divine, and from without  
Felt naught with the bodily senses. And hereof  
A Brother, desiring to have proof and see  
If, as it seemed, this were so, went and took  
A live coal from the hearth, and planted it  
On his bare foot. And Brother Simon felt  
Naught, and no mark upon his foot it left,  
Albeit a great while it had there remained,  
Till of itself it had consumed itself.

Now the said Brother Simon, when at board  
He sat him down, ere bodily food he took,  
Took and dispensed food ghostly, holding speech  
Of God the while. By the which holy talk  
A youth of San Severino he one time  
Converted, who in laic life had been  
A youth most vain and worldly, and by birth  
Noble, and very delicate of frame.  
And Brother Simon, taking the said youth  
Into the Order, did his secular clothes

160 CONCERNING BROTHER SIMON

Departed, and no more from that time forth  
Were seen or heard in all the country round.  
And the said miracle was plain to all  
The Ward of Fermo, where was situate  
That Convent.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XLI

CONCERNING BROTHER CONRAD OF  
OFFIDA AND OTHERS

THE Province of Ancona's March of old  
 Was, as with stars the firmament, adorned  
 With holy Brothers, who, like luminaries  
 Of heaven, enkindled and made glorious  
 The Order of Saint Francis and the world  
 By precept and ensample. Among the rest  
 Was Brother Lucido Antico first,  
 In very sooth a light of sanctity,  
 Burning with love divine ; whose glorious tongue,  
 Taught by the Holy Ghost, gat wondrous fruit  
 Of preaching : and Brother Bentivoglia next,  
 Of San Severino, who was sometime seen  
 By Brother Masseo of Severino raised  
 In air a mighty space, within the wood  
 While praying : through which miracle the said  
 Brother Masseo, then a parish-priest,  
 Was moved to quit his parish, and became  
 A Minor Brother, and of such sanctity  
 That he wrought many miracles, in life  
 And after ; and his body at Murro rests.  
 The aforesaid Brother Bentivoglia dwelt  
 At Trave Bonanti on a time, alone,  
 To tend and keep a leper ; and having charge  
 From his Superior to part thence and go

To another place some fifteen miles away,  
Loth to forsake that leper, with mighty love  
Kindled, he took and on his shoulders set  
And bare him all that journey of fifteen miles  
'Twixt dawn and sunrise to the aforesaid place  
Whereto he had been sent, that is of men  
Named Monte Saracino : o'er which space,  
Had he an eagle been, in so small time  
Have flown he could not : and at so supreme  
A miracle great wonder and amaze  
Filled all that countryside. . Another yet  
Was Brother Peter of Monticello, who  
Was once by Brother Servodeo seen,  
Him of Urbino—then his Guardian  
I' the old House of Ancona—raised from earth  
Five or six cubits bodily, and borne  
To the feet o' the Crucified within the church,  
Where he was praying. This Brother Peter, once  
Keeping Saint Michael the Archangel's fast  
With deep devotion, on the fortieth day,  
Last of that fast, was in the church at prayer,  
When by a youthful Brother to that end  
'Neath the High Altar hiding, for to spy  
Some token of his sanctity, he was heard  
With Michael the Archangel communing ;  
And these the words they spake : Saint Michael said :  
' Faithfully, Peter, hast thou toiled for me,  
And vexed thy body in many ways : behold !  
I am come to comfort thee, and eke for this,  
That thou mayst ask what grace soe'er thou wilt,

The which from God I will obtain for thee.'  
And Brother Peter answered him and said :  
' Most holy Prince of the celestial host,  
Loyallest zealot of God's honour, thou  
Who art of souls protector pitiful,  
This is the grace I ask, that thou of God  
Obtain for me the pardon of my sins.'

Replied Saint Michael : ' Ask some other grace,  
Since this shall I obtain full easily ' :  
And Brother Peter asking naught beside,  
The Archangel ended : ' For the faith devout  
The which thou hast in me, I will procure  
The grace thou askest, and much more to boot.'  
And, done their parley, which full long endured,  
The Archangel Michael parted from his side,  
Leaving him comforted exceedingly.

Now in this holy Brother Peter's time  
Lived Brother Conrad of Offida too ;  
And at Ferrano in the selfsame House  
Dwelling, within Ancona's territory,  
The aforesaid Brother Conrad went one day  
Into the wood to meditate on God,  
And Brother Peter followed secretly  
Behind him, for to see what should befall :  
And Brother Conrad 'gan to pray, and full  
Devoutly, with strong crying, did implore  
Mary the Virgin of her blessed Son  
To win for him this grace, that he might feel  
A little of that sweetness which of old  
Was by Saint Simeon felt upon the day

Of purification, when he bare in his arms  
Christ Jesu, Saviour blest. And, the said prayer  
Ended, Maid Mary, ever pitiful,  
Heard him. And lo ! the Queen of heaven appeared,  
Holding her little Son upon her arm,  
In a great splendour of light, and, drawing near  
To Brother Conrad, set the blessed babe  
Upon his arm, the which did Him receive  
With uttermost devoutness, and embraced,  
And closely clasped, and in his bosom laid,  
All melted and dissolved in love divine,  
And solace of the soul ineffable.  
And when Mary the Virgin went her way  
From Brother Conrad, Brother Peter hied  
Back to the House, not to be seen of him.  
But soon as Brother Conrad gat him home  
Joyful and gay, said Brother Peter to him :  
‘ O heavenly one, great solace hast thou had ! ’  
Quoth Brother Conrad : ‘ What is that thou sayst,  
O Brother Peter ? how know’st thou of aught  
That I have had ? ’ and Brother Peter said :  
‘ Well know I, well I know, that, with her Son,  
Mary the Virgin came to visit thee.’  
Then Brother Conrad, who, being truly meek,  
Touching God’s favours fain would secret be,  
Prayed him tell no man ; and so deep the love  
Thenceforth between them, that one heart and soul  
They seemed to share, in everything. One time  
The aforesaid Brother Conrad in the House  
At Siruolo by his prayers set free

A woman by the devil possessed, and all  
Night long did pray for her, but, being  
Seen of her mother, fled away with dawn,  
That by the people he might not be found  
And honoured.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XLII

HOW BROTHER CONRAD RECLAIMED  
A REFRACTORY BROTHER

Now Brother Conrad of Offida, named  
Aforesaid, touching gospel poverty  
A wondrous zealot of Saint Francis' Rule,  
Was so devout of life, and before God  
Of so great merit, that the blessed Christ  
With many miracles did honour him  
In life and after : whereof one was this :  
Being to Offida's Convent on a time  
Come as a guest, the Brothers prayed of him  
To admonish, for God's love and charity,  
A youthful Brother in that House, the which  
Did in such childish and unruly sort  
So wildly bear him, that of old and young  
He in that Brotherhood disturbance wrought ;  
While of the sacred office, and what else  
The Rule prescribed, little or naught recked he.  
Whence Brother Conrad, with compassion moved  
For the said youth, and at the Brothers' prayer,  
Called him apart, and with such fervent love  
Spake to him in devout admonishment  
Words so effectual that, God's grace to aid,  
He of a sudden from a child became  
Old in his ways, and so obedient, kind,  
Devout and diligent, peaceable withal

And lowly, and for every virtuous thing  
Eager, that as the whole House was erewhile  
By him disquieted, so were all men now  
Cheered and well pleased, and loved him mightily.  
Now, as God's pleasure was, it came to pass  
That, after his conversion some few days,  
Died the said youth, whereat right sorely grieved  
The Brothers ; and a few days after death  
His spirit to Brother Conrad did appear,  
As at the altar he devoutly prayed  
Of the said Convent, and full reverently  
Saluted him as Father ; whereupon  
Asked Brother Conrad : ' Who art thou ? ' Quoth

he :

' I am the soul of that young Brother who died  
Some days agone.' And Brother Conrad said :  
' O dearest Son, how is it with thee ? ' And he  
Replied : ' My dearest Father, by God's grace,  
And through thy teaching, it is thus far well,  
That damned I am not ; nathless for my sins,  
The which I had not time to cleanse enow,  
I suffer shrewdest pains of Purgatory.  
But prithee, Father, even as in thy ruth  
Thou succouredst me, yet living, so too now  
May it please thee succour me in these my pains,  
By saying a Paternoster certain times,  
Since in God's sight right welcome are thy prayers.'  
Then Brother Conrad kindly to his suit  
Consenting, having said one Paternoster  
And Requiem æternam, quoth that soul :

‘ O dearest Father, what great good, and what Refreshment do I feel ! I pray thee now Say it once more ’ : and Brother Conrad said it ; And after he had said it, quoth the soul : ‘ Know, holy Father, when thou prayest for me, Allayed is all my suffering ; wherefore I Beseech thee cease not thus for me to pray.’ Then Brother Conrad, seeing by these his prayers That soul so holpen, said a hundred times The Paternoster for him ; and, this done, ‘ I thank thee, dearest Father,’ quoth the soul, ‘ In God’s name, for the love which thou hast borne To-me-ward ; seeing that through thy prayers from all My pains am I delivered, and go my way To the celestial Kingdom ’ : and this said, The soul departed. Then to their great joy Did Brother Conrad cheer the Brothers’ hearts, And all in order told that vision o’er.  
Unto the blessed Christ His praise. Amen.

## XLIII

## CONCERNING THE VISION VOUCH-SAFED TO BROTHER PETER

WHAT time together in Ancona's Ward,  
Forano's Convent, the said Brothers dwelt,  
Conrad and Peter—of the March Province  
Two shining stars that were, two men of heaven—  
Seeing that between them was such mighty love  
And charity, that one single heart, one soul,  
Seemed in the twain, they bound them by this pact  
That every solace by God's grace vouchsafed  
Each unto other should in love make known :  
Which pact so made betwixt them, it befell  
One day that, Brother Peter being at prayer,  
Devoutly of Christ's Passion pondering,  
And how the blessed Mother of Christ, and John  
His best-beloved disciple, and withal  
Saint Francis, were at foot o' the Cross portrayed,  
Through sorrow of spirit crucified with Christ,  
There fell a longing on his heart to know  
Which for Christ's Passion had the mightiest grief  
Of all those three—the Mother who Him bare,  
Or the disciple on His breast who slept,  
Or he that had with Christ been crucified,  
Saint Francis. Thus devoutly pondering,  
Mary the Virgin to his eyes appeared,  
And at her side Saint John the Evangelist,

And eke Saint Francis, clad in glorious robes  
Of beatific lustre ; but the weed  
Saint Francis wore seemed fairer than Saint John's.  
And Brother Peter being sore afeard  
At the said vision, Saint John heartened him,  
Saying : ' Fear not, dear Brother, for we are come  
To comfort thee, and clear thee of thy doubt.  
Know therefore that the Mother of Christ and I  
Beyond all creatures for Christ's Passion grieve,  
And, after us, Saint Francis more than any,  
Whom therefore in such glory now thou seest.'  
And Brother Peter did inquire of him :  
' Most holy Apostle of Christ, say for what cause  
The raiment of Saint Francis doth appear  
More beauteous than thine own.' Replied Saint John :  
' This is the reason, that while in the world  
He viler raiment bare on back than I.'  
And when these words he had uttered, lo ! Saint John  
To Brother Peter gave a glorious robe,  
The which in hand he bare, and said to him :  
' Take thou this robe which I have hither brought  
To give thee' : and, as in the said robe Saint John  
Was fain to array him, Brother Peter fell  
To earth astonished, and 'gan cry aloud :  
' O Brother Conrad, Brother Conrad dear,  
Come hither quickly and help me, come and see  
Things marvellous ! ' And, as he spake the word,  
The holy vision vanished. Afterward,  
When Brother Conrad came, he told him all  
In order ; and they gave thanks to God. Amen.

## XLIV

OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JOHN  
OF LA PENNA

He of La Penna, Brother John, as yet  
Being a lad and laic, unto him  
In the March Province did one night appear  
A marvellous fair boy, who called him, saying :  
' John, hie thee to Saint Stephen's, where doth preach  
One of my Minor Brothers, and believe  
His doctrine thou, and to his words give ear,  
Since I have sent him thither : and, this done,  
Lo ! a long journey thou hast yet to make,  
And afterward shalt come to me.' Thereat  
He tarried not an instant, but uprose,  
And in his spirit felt a mighty change.  
And, coming to Saint Stephen's, he found there  
Great multitude of men and women set  
To hear the preaching. He that was to preach  
A Brother was named Philip, and one of those  
First Brethren to Ancona's March who came ;  
And in the March as yet were Houses few.  
Upstood this Brother Philip then to preach,  
And full devoutly preached he, not with words  
Of human wit, but in the power of Christ  
And of His spirit, heralding the realm  
Of life eternal. And, the preaching done,  
To the said Brother Philip the lad went,

And said to him : ' O Father, an thou list  
Receive me to the Order, fain would I  
Do penance, and serve Jesu Christ our Lord.'  
And Brother Philip, perceiving in the lad  
A marvellous innocence and ready will  
To do God service, said : ' On such a day  
To me at Ricanati shalt thou come,  
And I will cause receive thee ' : for 'twas there  
The Chapter of the Province should be held :  
Whereby the lad, who was most pure of heart,  
Deemed this was that long journey he must make,  
Even as the vision had foretold to him,  
And, after, go to Paradise : and thus  
He thought to do forthwith, when he should be  
Received into the Order. So he went  
And was received. And seeing at that time  
The things he thought fulfilled not, and when now  
The Minister in Chapter said : ' Whoe'er  
Into the Province of Provence would go  
Should have free licence,' a great longing fell  
On him to go there, thinking in his heart  
That this was that long journey he must make,  
Before he came to Paradise : but since  
He shamed to say it, confiding at the last  
In the aforesaid Philip, who had caused  
Receive him to the Order, tenderly  
He prayed the same this grace for him obtain—  
Into the Province of Provence to go.  
Then Brother Philip, seeing his purity  
And inward purpose, did that grace obtain :

Whereat with mighty gladness Brother John  
Set forth to go, having this thought for sure,  
That, the said journey ended, he should come  
To Paradise. But, as God's pleasure was,  
Within the aforesaid Province he remained  
In this same expectation and desire  
Five years and twenty, shewing forth the while  
A life-ensample of pure holiness,  
Ever in virtue growing, and in grace  
With God and with the people : mightily  
Alike of Brethren and of lay-folk loved.  
And one day Brother John devoutly praying  
With tears and lamentations for the hope  
As yet fulfilled not, and life's pilgrimage  
Too long continued, to his eyes appeared  
The Christ, the blessed One, at sight of whom  
His whole soul waxed as water, and anon  
Christ thus bespake him : ' Brother John, my son,  
Ask that thou wilt of Me ' : he answered : ' Lord,  
I know not what to ask Thee, save Thyself,  
Since naught beside do I desire : but this  
Alone I pray Thee, pardon Thou my sins,  
And grant me grace to see Thee yet again,  
Whenas my need is greater.' Said the Christ :  
' Thy prayer is heard,' and, having said, was gone,  
And Brother John remained with solace filled  
And heartened. Now the Brethen of the March,  
Hearing the fame of his great sanctity,  
Wrought on the General so that to the March  
He sent him an Obedience to return ;

Receiving which Obedience he with joy  
Set forward, thinking that, this journey done,  
According to the promise of the Christ,  
He needs must go to heaven. But, having thus  
Back to the Province of the March returned,  
For thirty years he lived there, nor was known  
To any of his kin, and day by day  
He waited on God's pity to redeem  
His promise. And meanwhile full many a time  
Right prudently the Guardianship he held ;  
And God by him wrought many miracles.  
And, among other gifts he had from God,  
He had the spirit of prophecy ; for once—  
He from the House gone forth upon a time—  
One of his Novices, by the Devil assailed,  
So sore was tempted, that, at last thereto  
Consenting, he took counsel with himself,  
So soon as Brother John should have returned,  
To quit the Order : which thing Brother John  
Knowing—both his temptation and intent—  
By spirit of prophecy, anon came home,  
And summoned the said Novice to himself,  
And bade him make confession : but, before  
Confession might be made, he told him all  
In order his temptation, as by God  
Revealed to him, and ended thus : ‘ My son,  
Since thou didst wait for me, nor wouldst depart  
Without my benediction, God this grace  
To thee hath given, that never shalt thou quit  
This Order, but shalt in the Order die,

With grace divine upon thee.' Therewithal  
Was the said Novice strengthened in goodwill,  
And stayed within the Order, and became  
A holy Brother: and these things were all  
By Brother Ugolino told to me.

Now the said Brother John, who was a man  
Of cheerful and calm mind, and seldom spake,  
Was to much prayer and deep devotion prone;  
And, chiefly, after Matins slept he ne'er  
Nor to his cell returned, but in the church  
Stayed praying till dawn: and, Matins o'er one night,  
As he continued praying, appeared to him  
God's Angel and bespake him: 'Brother John,  
Now is thy journey ended, for the which  
Thou hast long time been waiting; wherefore I  
Bring word to thee from God that thou demand  
What grace thou wilt of Him; and I bring word  
That thou choose, further, whether of these thou  
wilt—

One day in Purgatory, or seven days' pain  
In this world.' And, in this world Brother John  
Choosing the seven days' pain, anon fell sick  
Of divers maladies; for fever sore  
Gat hold of him, and gout in hands and feet,  
And pain in the side, and many another ill;  
But what worse tortured him was that a fiend  
Still stood before him, holding in his hand  
A mighty scroll, with all the sins inscribed  
That he had ever wrought, who said to him:  
'For these transgressions, or of heart, or tongue,

Or else in act accomplished, thou art damned  
Even to the depths of hell.' And naught of good  
Could he remember ever done by him,  
Or in the Order, or when-else-soe'er,  
But thought within his heart that he was damned,  
Even as the fiend had told him. So, when asked  
By any how he fared, he answered : ' Ill,  
For I am damned.' The Brothers, seeing this,  
Marvelled, and for an agèd Brother, hight  
Matthew of Monte Rubbiano, sent—  
A holy man, fast friend to Brother John.  
And the said Brother Matthew, coming thus  
Upon the seventh day of his distress,  
Saluted him, and asked him how he fared ;  
And he made answer that he fared but ill,  
For he was damned. Then Brother Matthew said :  
' Rememberest not how thou hast many a time  
Confessed to me, and I of all thy sins  
Have utterly assoiled thee ? And again  
Dost not remember how thou hast served God  
Within this holy Order year by year  
Continually ? And next rememberest not  
How that God's mercy doth the whole world's sin  
Surpass, and that our blessed Saviour Christ  
For our redemption paid a priceless sum ?  
Have then good hope that thou art surely saved.'  
And with that word, the term of chastening past,  
Fled the temptation, and the comfort came.  
And with exceeding joy spake Brother John  
To Brother Matthew : ' Since the hour is late,

And thou art weary, prithee go to rest':  
And he was loth to leave him, but at length  
Upon his strong entreaty went to rest,  
And with the Brother who served him Brother John  
Remained alone. And lo ! the blessed Christ  
Came in transcendent brightness, with a waft  
Of marvellous sweet odour, even as He  
Had promised to appear to him again,  
Whenas his need was greater ; and of all  
His sicknesses He healed him utterly.  
Then Brother John, with folded hands to God  
Returning thanks, that with so good an end  
He the long journey of this woful life  
Had consummated, to the hands of Christ  
Resigned his spirit, and gave it back to God,  
From this life mortal to immortal life  
Passing with Christ the blessed, whom so long  
He had desired, and waited to behold.  
And the said Brother John now rests within  
The Convent of La Penna of Saint John  
Aforesaid.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XLV

CONCERNING BROTHER HUMBLE  
AND BROTHER PEACEABLE

WITHIN the aforesaid Province of the March,  
After Saint Francis' death, were brothers twain  
In the Order—the one Brother Humble hight,  
And the other Brother Peaceable—the which  
Were men right holy and perfect ; and hereof  
One, to wit Brother Humble, lodged i' the House  
Of Soffiano, and there died ; the other  
Dwelt in a Convent far enow from him.  
Now, as it pleased God, Brother Peaceable,  
Being one day in a lone place at prayer,  
Was rapt in ecstasy, and saw the soul  
Of his brother, Brother Humble, the which then  
Passed from the body, going straight to Heaven,  
Without or let or hindrance. It befell  
After long years this Brother Peaceable,  
Who yet remained, was of the fellowship  
In the said House of Soffiano made,  
Wherein his brother had died. About that time,  
Bruforte's lords requesting, they exchanged  
The said House for another, whence befell,  
'Mong sundry matters else, they bore away  
The holy Brothers' relics, who had died  
Within that House ; and coming to the grave

Of Brother Humble, Brother Peaceable  
Took his own brother's bones, and in good wine  
Washed them, and wrapped them in a napkin  
white  
And with great reverence and devotion kissed,  
Weeping ; whereat the others marvelled sore,  
Deeming no good ensample set by him,  
In that, a man of so great sanctity,  
With carnal and with worldly love he seemed  
To mourn his brother, and to his reliques shew  
More worship than to the others, who had been  
No less than Brother Humble holy of life,  
And their bones worthy reverence, even as his.  
Then, knowing the Brothers' ill imaginings,  
This Brother Peaceable in lowly wise  
Did satisfy them, saying : ' Marvel not  
Hereof, my dearest Brothers, that I have done  
That to my brother's bones which to the rest  
I did not ; seeing that, blessed be His name,  
God knoweth it was no carnal love hereto  
Constrained me, as ye deem ; but this I did  
For that, from this life when my brother passed,  
I, in a lone place praying, and far from him,  
Beheld his soul ascending straight to heaven ;  
And therefore am I certified his bones  
Are sacred, and should be in Paradise :  
And, had God granted me such certainty  
Touching the other Brethren, to their bones  
I had done the selfsame reverence.' For which  
cause,

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Seeing his holy and devout intent,  
The brothers were right well edified, and gave  
Praise unto God, who doeth to his saints  
Such marvels.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XLVI

HOW TO A SICK BROTHER APPEARED  
MARY THE VIRGIN, AND HEALED  
HIM

IN the said House of Soffiano dwelt  
Of old a Minor Brother, of so great grace  
And sanctity of life that he appeared  
Wholly divine, and oft was rapt in God.  
This Brother being in God once all-absorbed  
And upward lifted, seeing he had the grace  
Of contemplation notably, to him  
Came divers kinds of birds, that tamely perched  
Upon his head and shoulders, arms and hands,  
And sang in marvellous wise. He was a man  
Full solitary, and seldom spake, but, when  
Questioned of any matter, would reply  
So graciously and wisely, that he seemed  
To be an Angel rather than a man ;  
Mighty in prayer and contemplation he,  
And of the Brothers in high reverence held.  
This brother of his virtuous life the course  
Now ending, as God willed, fell sick to death,  
So that of food he might no morsel take ;  
And therewithal no medicine of the flesh  
Would he receive ; but all his confidence  
Was in the blest physician, Jesu Christ,  
And in His blessed Mother, at whose hand

By divine goodness he earned grace to be  
Visited mercifully and consoled.  
Whence on a time, he lying on his bed  
With all his heart to death disposing him  
In uttermost devotion, to his eyes  
Appeared the blessed Mother of Jesu Christ,  
Mary the Maid, in glory, and with her  
Of Angels and of holy maids a host  
Innumerable and girt with marvellous light,  
Who to his bed drew nigh : and, seeing her,  
He took exceeding comfort and good cheer  
Of soul alike and body, and 'gan to pray  
Humbly that she would her belovèd Son  
Beseech of His own merits to draw him forth  
From out this prison-house of wretched flesh :  
Continuing in which prayer with many tears  
To him made answer calling him by name  
Mary the Virgin, saying : ' Doubt not, my son,  
For this thy prayer is heard, and I am come  
To comfort thee a little, ere thou depart  
From this life.' At the Virgin's side there stood  
Three holy virgins, the which bare in hand  
Three boxes of electuary, whose breath  
Was passing sweet and fragrant. Thereupon  
Mary the glorious Virgin took and oped  
One of those boxes, so that all the house  
Was with the odour filled ; and, with a spoon  
Taking of that electuary, she gave  
To the sick man thereof ; the which so soon  
As the sick man had tasted, he 'gan feel

Such comfort and such sweetness, that it seemed  
His soul within the body might not stay :  
Whence he began in such-like words to speak :  
‘ No more, O sweetest Mother of Jesu Christ,  
Maid Mary blest, healer of human kind !  
No more, blest mediciner, no more ! since I  
Such sweetness can sustain not.’ But the mild  
And pitying Mother with that electuary  
Served the sick man again and yet again,  
Making him take it, till the box was void,  
Then, void the first box, Mary Virgin blest,  
Taking the second box, thrust in the spoon  
To serve him with it, whereat he gently plained :  
‘ Mother of God most beauteous, if my soul  
Is, as it were, all molten by the breath  
And sweetness of the first electuary,  
How shall I bear the second ? Blessed one,  
By all the saints and angels I thee pray  
Vouchsafe no more to give me.’ Answer made  
Our Lady : ‘ Of this second box, my son,  
Taste yet a little.’ And, giving him thereof,  
‘ To-day, my son, thou hast received,’ she said,  
‘ As much as may suffice thee : O my son,  
Be comforted, since I will come for thee  
Ere long, and bring thee to my own Son’s realm,  
Whom still thou’st sought and longed for ’ : and,  
this said,  
Taking her leave of him, she went her way ;  
And he remained so heartened and consoled  
By that confection’s sweetness, that he lived

Many days yet sustained and strong, though void  
Of bodily food. And after certain days,  
As with the Brothers joyfully he spake,  
With great delight and gladness from this life  
His soul departed.

To the praise of God.

## XLVII

HOW A CERTAIN BROTHER WAS  
ENTRANCED FOR THREE DAYS,  
AND SAW A VISION OF WHAT  
SHOULD AFTERWARD BEFALL  
THE RULE OF SAINT FRANCIS

Now Brother James of Massa, to whom God  
Opened the door of His hid mysteries,  
And gave him perfectly of Holy Writ  
And of things future to discern and know,  
Was of such sanctity, that Brother Giles  
Of Assisi, of Montino Brother Mark,  
And Brothers Juniper and Lucido,  
Said touching him that greater before God  
None in the world they knew. This Brother James  
Myself had great desire to see ; for when  
Of Brother Giles' companion, Brother John,  
I made request he would expound to me  
Certain things spiritual, he answered thus :  
‘Wouldst thou be taught the Spirit's way, seek  
speech  
With Brother James of Massa, for by him  
E'en Brother Giles desired to be illumed,  
And from his words may naught be ta'en away,  
Nor thereto added ; seeing his mind hath probed  
The hidden things of heaven, and his words are  
The words of the Holy Spirit, and there lives

None upon earth whom I so much desired  
To look upon as the said Brother James.'

He, at the outset of the ministry  
Of Brother John, when praying once at Prime,  
Was rapt in God, and for three days remained  
In the said trance and ecstasy, the while,  
All bodily sense suspended, he so void  
Of sense continued, that the Brotherhood  
Doubted if he were dead: and in that trance  
Was shewn to him of God what things should be  
And come to pass touching our holy Rule.  
Which when I heard, the greater in me grew  
My strong desire to see and speak with him.  
And when God willed that my occasion came  
To speak with him, I prayed him on this wise :  
' If that be true which I have heard of thee,  
Hold it not hid, I pray thee. I have heard,  
What time thou didst remain three days as dead,  
That, among other things, God shewed to thee  
That which in this our Rule should come to pass ;  
And Brother Matthew, Minister of the March,  
Gave me to know hereof, to whom thyself  
Under Obedience didst declare the same.'

Then Brother James in deep humility  
Confessed that Brother Matthew's words were true:  
Which words—to wit what Brother Matthew said,  
The Minister of the March—were like to these:  
' I know a Brother, to whom God hath revealed  
All that within our Rule shall come to pass ;  
For Brother James of Massa did unfold

In words to me, that, after many things  
Touching the state of the Church Militant  
Shewn him of God, he saw in vision a tree  
Fair and full large, whereof the root was gold,  
Whose fruits were men, and Minor Brothers, all,  
And the main boughs in number ranged to match  
The Provinces of the Order ; and each bough  
The selfsame tale of Brothers did contain,  
As did the Province by that bough designed.  
He then of all the Brothers in the Rule,  
As of each several Province, knew the sum,  
And eke the names, the ages, and the states,  
With their great offices and dignities,  
Yea, and the graces and the faults of all.  
And Brother John of Parma he beheld  
Upon the summit of the midmost bough  
Of the said tree ; and on the branches' tops,  
That were around the midmost bough, were set  
The Ministers of all the Provinces.  
And, after this, Christ seated on a throne,  
Vast and of dazzling whiteness, he beheld ;  
And, calling to Saint Francis, the said Christ  
Gave him a chalice full of life, and said,  
As in his hand he placed it : “ Get thee hence,  
Seek out thy Brothers, and give to them this cup  
Of the spirit of life to drink of, for behold !  
The spirit of Satan shall against them rise,  
And strike full sore, and many of them shall fall,  
Nor rise again.” And for companions, Christ  
Unto Saint Francis did two Angels give.

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And afterward, soon as the storm had ceased,  
Straight from this golden tree-root up there sprang  
Another tree all golden, which brought forth  
Leaves, flowers, and fruits, of gold. And of this  
tree—

Its spreading breadth and depth, beauty and worth—  
Now to hold silence, rather than to speak,  
Were better.'

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## XLVIII

HOW CHRIST APPEARED TO BROTHER  
JOHN OF VERNIA

AMONG the other wise and holy Sons  
And Brothers of Saint Francis—Sons that are  
Their father's glory, as saith Solomon—  
Lived in our time within the March Province  
The venerable and holy Brother John  
Of Fermo, who, long time as he abode  
In the holy House of Vernia, where he passed  
From this life, was called simply Brother John  
Of Vernia : for he was indeed a man  
Of matchless life and utmost sanctity.  
This Brother John, while yet a lad and laic,  
With all his heart the way of penitence,  
That keepeth purity of body and soul,  
Desired, and hence, though quite a little lad,  
'Gan shirt of mail and iron girdle wear,  
And do great abstinence ; and above all  
When with the Canons of Saint Peter's Church  
Of Fermo, who a life of splendour lived,  
He sojourned, would shun bodily delights,  
And starve the flesh with rigorous abstinence ;  
But, having comrades sore opposed thereto,  
The which did spoil him of his shirt of mail,  
And baulked his abstinence in divers wise,

By God inspired, he thought to leave the world,  
With all who loved it, and present himself  
Whole to His arms Who hangs upon the Cross,  
And in the habit of the crucified  
Saint Francis ; and so did he. Being, then,  
Received in the Order, thus a little lad,  
And to the Novice-master's care consigned,  
So spiritual and devout he grew, that oft,  
Hearing his master speak of God, his heart  
Would in him melt, as wax before the fire ;  
And to such sweetness, through this love divine,  
Of grace was he enkindled, that, to bide  
Still and sustain such sweetness past his power,  
He gat him up, and, as one drunken in soul,  
Now to and fro the garden, now the wood,  
Now through the church would run, where'er the fire  
And force of the spirit drove him. Then, as time  
Sped onward in its course, the grace of God  
Made ever this angelic man to grow  
From virtue unto virtue, and in gifts  
Of heaven, and holy liftings of the soul,  
And raptures ; that at times his mind was borne  
Up to the splendours of the Cherubim,  
Or to seraphic ardours, or the joys  
Of blessed spirits, and at other time  
To passionate-fond embracings of the Christ,  
Not inward only felt in thrills of soul,  
But eke by clear signs bodily from without :  
And above all one time in marvellous wise  
Kindled his heart the flame of love divine,

So that for three full years that flame endured ;  
 In the which time he wondrously received  
 Divine consolings and enlightenments,  
 With inward contemplations, ecstasies,  
 And visitings from heaven, and many a time  
 Was rapt in God ; and, in a word, throughout  
 Those years aforesaid all on fire he seemed,  
 Burning with love of Christ ; and this befell  
 On the holy mount of Vernia. And since  
 God for His children hath peculiar care—  
 Dispensing to them at their several times  
 Now solace, and now dole, now prosperous hap,  
 Now adverse, as He seeth that they have need,  
 For to sustain them in humility,  
 Or kindle them the more to fond desire  
 Of heavenly things—after three years it pleased  
 God's goodness from the aforesaid Brother John  
 To filch that joy and flame of love divine,  
 And pluck from him all solace of the soul :  
 Whereat without light Brother John remained,  
 And without love of God, all comfortless,  
 Downcast and wobegone. For which thing's sake  
 Thus full of anguish through the wood he went  
 Hither and thither with cries, tears, and sighs,  
 Calling on his belov'd, his spirit's spouse,  
 Who had so hidden himself, and gone from him ;  
 Without whose presence nor repose nor rest  
 Could his soul compass : in no place nathless  
 Could he by any means sweet Jesu find,  
 Nor to those rapturous spirit-thrills of love

For Christ restore him, as he wont to do.  
And many days this trouble stayed by him,  
The while in ceaseless tears and sighs he still  
Persévered, praying that of His pity God  
Would give him back his soul's belovèd spouse.  
At last when, as God willed, He had enow  
His patience proved, and kindled his desire,  
One day, as Brother John through the said wood  
Was pacing, thus afflicted and distressed,  
In very weariness he sat him down,  
Against a beech-tree leaning, and remained  
With face all bathed in tears, and gazing up  
To heaven. And suddenly, behold ! appeared  
Jesu the Christ beside him in the path  
Whence Brother John had come ; but naught He  
spake.

And Brother John, beholding, recognized  
The Christ, and cast him suddenly at His feet,  
And with unmeasured tears in humblest wise  
Besought Him, saying : ‘ Lord, help me, seeing  
that I  
Without Thee, Saviour, do in darkness dwell  
And grief ; most tender Angel, without Thee  
In grief I dwell and anguish ; without Thee,  
Son of the most high God, I stand ashamed,  
Confounded ; without Thee bereft am I  
Of every blessing, and as one struck blind,  
Since thou art Jesu, very light of souls ;  
Without Thee I am lost and damned, since Thou  
Art life of souls, yea, of all lives the life ;

Without Thee barren I am and dry, since Thou  
Art source of every gift and every grace ;  
Without Thee I am all disconsolate,  
Since Thou art Jesu, our redemption, love,  
Desire—that comfortable bread and wine  
Which cheers the hearts of Angels and all Saints :  
Illumine me, most gracious Master mine,  
Most pitiful Shepherd, for Thy sheep am I,  
Albeit unworthy.' But whereas the fond  
Desire of holy men, which God delays  
To answer, kindleth them to mightier love  
And merit, Christ the blessed went His way  
Nor heeding him, nor speaking, and so passed  
Adown the aforesaid path. Then Brother John  
Rose and ran after, fell at His feet once more,  
And with a holy importunity  
Stayed and besought Him, with devout tears saying :  
' O most sweet Jesu, pity my distress ;  
In the multitude of Thy mercy, by the truth  
Of Thy salvation, hear and heed my cry ;  
Restore to me the gladness of Thy face  
And pitiful regard, since all the earth  
O'erfloweth with Thy mercy.' And again  
Christ turned from him, and answered not a word,  
Nor gave him any comfort, but instead  
Dealt with him as a mother with her child,  
Who maketh him desire the breast and run  
Behind her weeping, that thereafter he  
May be more fain to take it. Brother John  
Thereat with mightier ardour and desire

Followed the Christ : and, coming up with Him,  
The blessed Christ toward him turned, and looked  
With glad regard and gracious, and therewith,  
Opening His merciful most holy arms,  
Clasped him with utmost sweetness ; and, as thus  
His arms He widely opened, Brother John  
Saw issuing from the Saviour's sacred breast  
Such rays of marvellous light, as all the wood  
And his own soul and body did illumine.  
Then Brother John fell at the feet of Christ ;  
And blessed Jesu gave him graciously,  
As erst the Magdalen, His foot to kiss ;  
And Brother John with deepest reverence  
Took and with tears so bathed it, that he seemed  
A second Magdalen, devoutly saying :  
' I pray Thee, Lord, upon my trespasses  
Look not, but for Thy sacred passion's sake,  
And by the sprinkling of Thy precious blood,  
With Thy love's grace reanimate my heart  
Seeing that this is Thy command, that Thee  
With all our heart and all our soul we love,  
The which commandment may no man fulfil,  
Save only with Thine aid : O aid me then,  
Thou best-belovèd Son of God, with all  
My heart to love Thee, and with all my strength.'  
And thus as at the feet of Jesu Christ  
Spake Brother John, his prayer was heard of Him,  
And he received the former grace, to wit,  
The flame of love divine, and felt himself  
Wholly renewed and comforted ; and, knowing

The gift of divine grace restored to him,  
He 'gan give thanks unto the blessed Christ,  
And kiss His feet ; and afterward, whenas  
He rose to gaze upon the Saviour's face,  
Christ proffered and outstretched His sacred hands,  
That he might kiss them : and when Brother John  
Had kissed them, he drew nearer and pressed close  
To Jesu's bosom, and embraced and kissed  
His ever sacred breast, and Christ embraced  
And kissed him. And in this embrace and kiss  
Such divine fragrance Brother John perceived,  
That, had all spices in the world, all things  
Of odorous breath, been gathered into one,  
Beside that perfume they had noisome seemed.  
And Brother John all ravished was thereby,  
And soothed, and lightened ; and for many months  
Did that sweet savour in his soul remain.  
And from his lips, at heavenly wisdom's fount  
Thus watered from the Saviour's sacred breast,  
Thenceforth words issued wondrous and divine,  
Which changed their hearts who heard him, and  
brought forth  
Much fruit of souls. And in the woodland path,  
Whereon the blessed feet of Christ had stood,  
And a good space around it, Brother John  
Perceived the fragrance and the splendour still,  
Long after, oft as thitherward he went.  
And Brother John returning to himself  
After this ecstasy, when lost to sight  
Christ's bodily presence, so from the abyss

Of His divinity remained in soul  
Illumined, that, albeit of human lore  
Unlearn'd, nathless he marvellously solved  
And cleared the subtlest questions and profound  
Of the Holy Trinity, and deep mysteries  
Hid in the sacred Scriptures. And full oft,  
Whenas before the Pope and Cardinals,  
Before the King and barons, he discoursed—  
Masters and doctors—they were all amazed  
At the deep thoughts and lofty words he spake.  
Unto the praise of Jesu Christ. Amen.

## XLIX

HOW BROTHER JOHN, SAYING MASS  
FOR THE DEAD, SAW MANY SOULS  
SET FREE FROM PURGATORY

ONCE on the morrow of All Hallows Day,  
When the said Brother John was saying Mass  
For all the souls o' the dead, as Holy Church  
Ordaineth, with such potency of love,  
And such compassionate ruth, that sacrament  
Sublime he offered, which for efficacy,  
Beyond all else that can be wrought for them,  
The souls o' the dead desire, that he appeared  
All melted by the sweetness of his ruth  
And love fraternal. Wherefore in that Mass,  
As he devoutly raised the Body of Christ,  
And unto God the Father offered it—  
For love of Jesu Christ His blessèd Son,  
Who to redeem souls hung upon the Cross,  
Praying Him out of Purgatory-pains  
Vouchsafe set free the souls o' the dead, by Him  
Created and redeemed—sudden he saw  
As 'twere an endless multitude of souls  
Come forth from Purgatory, as countless sparks  
Fly from a furnace-fire, and saw them mount  
To heaven by merit of Christ's Passion, who  
For quick and dead is offered day by day  
In that most sacred Host, worthy to be  
For ever and ever worshippèd. Amen.

## L

## HOW BROTHER JAMES OF FALLERONE APPEARED AFTER DEATH TO BROTHER JOHN OF VERNIA

IT chanced upon the time when Brother James Of Fallerone, a right holy man, In Mogliano's Convent lay sore sick, Which is in Fermo's Ward, that Brother John Of Vernia, as aforesaid, dwelling then I' the House of Massa, of his sickness heard, And, since he loved him as his own dear sire, Fell straight to prayer for him, beseeching God Devoutly in the orisons of his mind To the said Brother James He would restore Soundness of body, if that might serve his soul. And while thus praying devoutly, he was rapt Into a trance, and saw a mighty host In the air of many Angels and of Saints Standing above the cell of Brother James, That was within the wood, so dazzling bright, That all the country round was lit thereby. And 'mid these Angels he saw Brother James, The sick man whom he prayed for, in white robes Resplendent : and among them therewithal Saint Francis, holy Father, he beheld Decked with the sacred Stigmata of Christ,

And with great glory. And the saintly form  
Of Brother Lucido he saw and knew,  
And Brother Matthew of Rubbiano's mount,  
And Brethren more beside, ne'er seen of him  
Or known in this life. And as Brother John  
Was gazing on this blessed company  
With great delight, it was revealed to him  
That of a surety this sick Brother's soul  
Was saved, and of that sickness he would die,  
But that, e'en so, he would not after death  
Pass instantly to Paradise, but must  
In Purgatory awhile be purified.  
Upon this revelation Brother John  
Felt at the saving of his soul such joy,  
That for the body's death he grieved no whit,  
And in the rapture of his heart exclaimed  
Within himself, and said : ' O Brother James,  
Sweet Father ! Brother James, my Brother sweet !  
O Brother James, most faithful thrall of God !  
Companion of the Angels, Brother James,  
And compeer of the blessed ! ' And amid  
This joy and surety to himself he came,  
And the same instant gat him from the House,  
And went to visit the said Brother James  
At Mogliano, and, there finding him  
So sorely burdened that he scarce could speak,  
Foretold to him his body's death, and eke  
The saving and the glory of his soul,  
According to the certainty he had,  
By divine revelation : whereupon,

Waxed glad in soul and countenance, Brother James  
Received him with great joy and merry laugh,  
And, rendering thanks for the good news he bare,  
Devoutly did commend himself to him.

Then Brother John besought him tenderly  
That after death he would vouchsafe return,  
And tell him of his state : and Brother James  
Gave him his promise, an God willed it so.

And these words spoken, when the hour drew nigh  
For his departure, Brother James 'gan say  
That verse o' the Psalm : ' I will lie down in peace,  
And in eternal life will take my rest ' :

And, this verse said, with blithe and happy face  
He passed from this life. Afterward, when now  
He had been buried, Brother John returned  
Unto the House of Massa, and therein

Looked for the promise Brother James had given  
That on the appointed day he would return.

But the said day, as he was praying, Christ  
With a great company appeared to him  
Of Angels and of Saints, and Brother James  
Was not among them. Wherefore Brother John  
Much marvelling commended him to Christ  
Devoutly. Afterward, the following day,

As Brother John was in the wood at prayer,  
Lo ! companied with Angels, Brother James  
Appeared to him, all glorious and glad :  
And Brother John bespake him : ' Father, why  
Upon the promised day returnedst thou not ? '

Made answer Brother James : ' For that some need

I had of purifying ; but in that hour  
When Christ appeared to thee, and thou therewith  
Commendest me to Him, Christ heard thy prayer,  
And from all pain released me ; thereupon  
To Brother James of Massa I appeared ;  
And that devout lay-Brother, who the Mass  
Was serving, saw the consecrated Host,  
In act of elevation by the priest,  
Changed and transformed to a fair living Child ;  
And I bespake him : " With this Child to-day  
Of life eternal to the realm I go,  
The which can no man enter without Him." "  
And, these words spoken, Brother James was gone,  
Passing with all that blissful company  
Of Angels into heaven ; and Brother John  
Remained much solaced.

The said Brother James  
Of Fallerone on the Vigil died  
Of holy James the Apostle, in the month  
July, and in the aforesaid monastery  
Of Mogliano ; where the grace of God  
After his death, and for his merit's sake,  
Wrought wonders.

To the praise of Christ. Amen.

## LI

HOW BROTHER JOHN OF VERNIA  
HAD A VISION IN WHICH WERE  
REVEALED TO HIM THE HIDDEN  
MYSTERIES OF GOD

Now seeing that Brother John of Vernia  
Aforesaid had effectually foregone  
All worldly solace and delights of time,  
His whole delight, and his whole hope, on God  
Reposing, therefore were vouchsafed to him  
Of divine Goodness wondrous comfortings  
And revelations, and in special wise  
Upon the feast of Christ ; whence on a time,  
The season of Christ's birth now drawing nigh,  
Wherein from Jesu's sweet humanity  
He looked sure solace to receive of God,  
The Holy Spirit in his soul did plant  
Such masterful exuberance of love  
And fervour for the charity of Christ,  
In that He did abase Himself to take  
Our flesh upon Him, that in very sooth  
His soul did seem drawn from the body forth,  
And burning like a furnace : the which fire  
Unable to sustain, with anguish wrung,  
He, all his being molten, cried aloud,

Since through the Holy Spirit's fierce assault,  
And the surpassing fervour of his love,  
He could not hold from crying. And at that hour,  
Wherein this boundless fervour came to him,  
Came therewithal the hope so sure and strong  
Of his salvation, that for naught i' the world  
Believed he, should death fall upon him then,  
He needs must pass to Purgatory ; and this  
For half a year endured, albeit not thus  
Continually that wild excess he felt  
Of fervour ; but at certain times o' the day  
It came to him : and then and afterward  
Received he visitations from on high,  
And comforts marvellous and manifold,  
And many a time was rapt in God, as saw  
That Brother, who from the first these matters  
wrote.

Among which times he was one night so raised  
And rapt in God, that he beheld in Him—  
In their Creator—all created things  
That are in heaven and earth, and, each by each,  
All their perfections, orders, and degrees.  
And then discerned he clear how everything  
Created its Creator doth display,  
And how God is above, within, without,  
Beside, all things created. Therewithal  
Three Persons in one God he skilled to know,  
And one God in three Persons, and the love  
How infinite which made the Son of God  
Take flesh, obedient to the Father's will.

And lastly in that vision he perceived  
How that none other way there was whereby  
The soul might come to God, and compass life  
Eternal, save through Christ, the blessed One,  
Who is the Way, the Truth, the Life o' the soul.

Amen.

## LII

HOW BROTHER JOHN OF VERNIA  
WAS ENTRANCED WHILE SAYING  
MASS

To the said Brother John within the House  
Of Mogliano aforesaid, as relate  
The Brothers who were present, once befell  
This marvellous hap, to wit that the first night  
After Saint Lawrence' Octave, and within  
Our Lady's Octave of the Assumption Feast,  
When with the other Brethren he had said  
Matins in church, and on him unawares  
The unction 'gan of heavenly grace descend,  
He gat him to the garden, there to brood  
Upon Christ's Passion, and dispose himself  
With his whole soul to celebrate the Mass  
Which on that morn it was his lot to chant.  
And as he brooded on those words that are  
The consecration of the Body of Christ—  
The ' Hoc est Corpus Meum '—pondering  
Christ's boundless love, whereby it pleased Him  
Not only with His precious blood redeem,  
But eke bequeath us for our spirit's food  
His body and blood most worshipful, the love  
Of the sweet Jesu 'gan so grow in him  
To warmth and rapture, that his soul no more  
Could bear such sweetness; but he cried aloud

As drunken in spirit, and ceased not to himself  
Repeating : ‘ Hoc est Corpus Meum ’ ; since  
So saying, he seemed to see the blessed Christ,  
With the Maid Mary and a multitude  
Of Angels, and, so saying, was illumed  
In all the mysteries profound and high  
Of that exalted Sacrament. And when  
Dawn now appeared, he passed into the church  
In that soul-fervour, that solicitude,  
That utterance on his lips, and thinking not  
That he was seen or heard of any man ;  
Nathless within the Choir there was at prayer  
A certain Brother who saw and heard it all.  
And in this fervour, through the overflow  
Of heavenly grace unable to refrain,  
With a loud voice he cried, continuing thus  
Until the hour of Mass, whenas he turned  
To make him ready, and to the Altar went.  
And, Mass begun, the further in that Mass  
He fared, the greater grew his love for Christ,  
And fervour of devotion ; and therewith  
Was given a sense of God unspeakable,  
The which himself conceived not, nor with tongue  
Could utter. And fearing lest this sense of God  
And the said fervour should so wax in strength  
That he must leave the Mass, he fell in great  
Perplexity, nor wist what course to take—  
Or to proceed, or tarry. And since the like  
Had erst at times befallen him, and the Lord  
That fervour had so tempered, that to leave

WAS ENTRANCED WHILE SAYING MASS 209

The Mass he had needed not, so trusted he  
Now for like power, and with great fear began  
Go forward with the Mass, and came at length  
To the Preface of Our Lady, when so waxed  
Within him the divine illumining  
And gracious sweetness of the love of God,  
That coming to the words 'Qui pridie,'  
Such rapturous sweetness he could scarce endure.  
At last, in act to consecrate, and o'er  
The Host now saying the consecrative words,  
When half the words, to wit 'Hoc est,' were said,  
By no means further might he win, but stood  
These words 'Hoc est' repeating, and no more.  
And why he might not further win was this,  
For that Christ's presence he both felt and saw  
Girt with an angel-host, whose majesty  
Sustain he could not : and he saw that Christ  
Would enter not the Host, or that the Host  
Would change not to the Body of Christ, if he  
Not uttered of those words the second half,  
To wit, the 'Corpus Meum.' Whereupon,  
While he remained in this solicitude,  
And could no further go, the Guardians  
And other brethren, with lay-folk beside  
A many, that were in church to hear the Mass,  
Drew nigh the altar, and beheld amazed  
The acts of Brother John ; and many of them  
Wept for devotion. After a long while  
When, as God willed it, Brother John pronounced  
With loud voice 'Corpus Meum,' suddenly

Vanished the form of bread within the Host,  
And Jesu Christ, the blessed One, appeared  
Incarnate, glorified, revealing plain  
The meekness and the love which made Him take  
Flesh of the Virgin Mary, and maketh Him  
Into the priest's hands day by day to pass,  
Whenas the Host he consecrates : whereby  
He was yet more in sweetness upward borne  
Of contemplation. Wherefore when he now  
Had raised the Host on high, and therewithal  
The cup had consecrated, he was rapt  
From his own self, and, being from bodily sense  
In soul suspended, back his body fell ;  
And, save that by the guardian he was held,  
Who stood behind him, he had fallen to earth.  
Whereat the Brothers who were in the church,  
And lay-folk, men and women, running up  
Together, he was carried as one dead  
Into the sacristy ; for cold his form  
And corpse-like ; and the fingers of his hands  
Were clenched so firm that scarce could they unclasp  
Or stir them. Thus as one half-dead he lay,  
Or rapt, till Tierce ; and it was summer-time.  
And seeing that I, who was there present, yearned  
Exceedingly to know how God had wrought  
Toward him, soon as to himself he came,  
I went and prayed him for the love of God  
To tell me the whole matter : wherefore he,  
Since well he trusted me, told all the tale  
In order ; saying among other things

That as he pondered on the body and blood  
Of Jesu Christ, and also therebefore,  
The blood within him had dissolved like wax  
Much molten, and his flesh all boneless seemed,  
So that he could not lift or hand or arm,  
To make the sign o' the Cross above the Host  
Or chalice ; and he told me this beside,  
That ere he was made priest, it was of God  
Revealed to him that he would swoon in Mass,  
But, for that many Masses he had said,  
And this had ne'er befallen him, he deemed  
The revelation had not been of God :  
Nathless, that haply fifty days before  
The Assumption of Our Lady, during which  
The aforesaid hap befell him, 'twas again  
Revealed to him of God, that this would fall  
About the time of the Assumption Feast,  
But that he afterward remembered not  
The revelation.

To Christ's praise. Amen.



## NOTE

THE text of the *Fioretti*, followed in this translation, that of the Codice Riccardiano at Florence, of the tenth century, as embodied in the edition of G. L. Isserini, published in 1903. In some instances, however, preference has been given to other readings, crowded, with two exceptions, from Luigi Manzoni's edition of 1902, which is based on the Codice Palatino, dating 1396.

In the choice of readings, as well as in the interpretation, I have been partly guided by reference to the original Latin version, and have also consulted the excellent prose rendering of Sir T. W. Arnold, together with that edited by the late Cardinal Manning in 1863, and another published in 1899 by Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co., founded on the translation issued by the Franciscan Fathers at Upton.

The following is a list of the variants here adopted:

### GE LINE

3 12 *possessori* for *professori*.  
6 9 *che periva, e per* for *che per via et meco dello*.  
6 17 After *al fine* add *nello quale elgli vedeva una fornacie ardente, nella quale*.  
6 11 *forestiere, i frati il pregarono* for *frati forestieri, etc.*  
1 21 *et anchora pochi luoghi* for *poi che i luoghi*.  
1 24 After *di spirito* add *di Cristo*.  
2 15 After *ricevuto* add *all' Ordine. Andò dunque, e fu ricevuto*.  
6 28 *Iddio a* for *i' ò*.  
8 12 *in choro* for *intorno*.



# THE LIFE OF BROTHER GILES

### BROTHER GILES OF ASSISI

Received into the Order . . . . .	23 April 1208 or 1209
Died . . . . .	23 April 1262

*The earliest available Life of Brother Giles is contained in the Chronica XXIV Generalium (completed in 1379). This version in English by James Rhoades was first published posthumously in The World's Classics in 1925 and reprinted in 1934, 1947 and 1949.*

## I

## THE LIFE OF BROTHER GILES

BEGINNETH here how Brother Giles did live,  
A man right saintly and contemplative ;  
For holy patterns that in Saints appear  
Do prick the hearts of the devout, who hear,  
To spurn delight in transitory things,  
And kindle them to eager covetings  
Of the true riches that eternal are.  
And therefore of our Lord will I declare  
And utter forth words wondrous to reveal,  
Unto God's honour and the hearer's weal,  
Which in our holy Father, Brother Giles,  
The Holy Ghost accomplished, as erewhiles  
By his companions I have heard it told,  
And, with the said Saint communing of old,  
Myself have learned, who did his bosom share,  
And put the same in writing, howsoe'er  
Unworthy. But as God foreshowed to him  
Now first a convert, yet in laic trim,  
That he to high perfection must attain,  
E'en so was our Lord's hand not laid in vain  
Upon him ; for himself 'gan ponder how  
He might in all things please our Lord.

Lo ! now,  
Like to some new forerunner of the King,  
The ever-blest Saint Francis, fashioning

By marvellous ensamples fair to tread  
The ways of patience and of lowlihead !  
Who being two years converted, it befell  
A wondrous man in wit adornedèd well,  
Hight Bernard, passing rich, and one men call  
Peter Cathanny, did his lure enthral  
The vows of gospel poverty to keep.  
For at his bidding all their worldly heap  
Dispersing to poor folk they made away,  
And the stern rule embracing from that day  
Of gospel penitence and perfectness,  
Forthwith did on the Minor Brothers' dress,  
And in great fervour of spirit hied them both  
Within the Order. Brother Giles in troth  
Anon these tidings of Saint Francis learned,  
Being yet laic, and after eight days burned  
With fire divine, and as the following day—  
Feast of our Lord and of Saint George—he lay,  
From the world's weal twelve hundred years and nine,  
Rose up at dawn, and to Saint George's shrine  
Came, where is now the Convent of Saint Clare,  
Mindful of his soul's health, and, done his prayer,  
Yearned sore the blessed Francis for to see.  
With Bernard then of Quintavalle he  
Lodged in a little cot, wherein abode  
Peter Cathanny. Thither then he strode  
By the straight path, still pondering in his mind  
The things that he had spurned and left behind,  
When lo ! Saint Francis, on his homeward way  
From out the wood where he had gone to pray,

Met him : and Brother Giles made haste to greet  
Beholding him, and threw him at his feet,  
Kneeling, and tenderly besought that he  
Would deign receive him of his company.  
To whom Saint Francis answered : ‘ Dear my friend,  
Great grace, methinks, our Lord to thee doth send ;  
For, if the Emperor to Assisi came,  
And of the city-folk should certain claim  
To be his knights, were they not bound enow  
To welcome him ? Much more our Lord art thou,  
Whom He hath chosen for His thrall and knight.’  
Thus did the blessed Francis cheer his sprite  
With comfortable words, and eke bade know  
With what vocation he was called ; and so  
Himself too greeted him, and, having led  
Within the house of Brother Bernard, said :  
‘ A Brother, see, the Lord hath sent us here ! ’  
And in the Lord’s name they received him there.

## II

OF HIS VISIT TO SAINT JAMES'S  
SHRINE, AND TO THE HOLY  
SEPULCHRE

Not long had Brother Giles the habit ta'en,  
Ere as a pilgrim to Saint James's fane  
From Lord Saint Francis he gat leave to wend ;  
And so it fell that, ere his journey's end  
Upon that road, he might not drive aback  
The hunger born of poverty's sore lack,  
The which nathless he suffered with good will,  
Sith no man might he find his lack to fill.  
And coming to a certain barn one day,  
Wherein a remnant of bean-seeds there lay,  
He gleaned and ate them, and slept night-long there :  
And so our Lord refreshed him with that fare,  
As he of divers dainties had partook.  
And in good sooth far liefer might he brook  
To house in wastes and solitudes, than where  
Much folk abounded, that for fast and prayer  
He lack not leisure. Once, as he did go,  
A beggar asked an alms of him, and lo !  
His hood he gave him, having naught beside,  
And twenty days thereafter hoodless hied.  
But to a Lombard village when he came,  
Hight Ficarollo, as he passed the same,

One called to him, and he, for poverty  
Being sore straitened, at his call drew nigh,  
Thinking to have some gift of him : but he  
Put dice into his hand, I trow, for fee,  
And with the said dice challenged him to play :  
And, nothing angered, Brother Giles did say  
Meekly : ‘ May our Lord pardon thee ! ’ E’en so,  
As through the world it was his lot to go,  
Full oft he met with mockeries.

After that,

Free licence of Saint Francis’ hand he gat  
And warranty, with one companion eke,  
Our Lord Christ Jesu’s Sepulchre to seek,  
And other regions of that holy clime :  
But, at Brudese’s port arrived, some time  
He needs must tarry, waiting for the ship.  
Meanwhile a water-pot he took in grip,  
And through the town went calling : ‘ Who will buy  
Water ? ’ and for his wage gat food supply  
Whereof his fellow and himself were fain.  
Thereafter, having passed the midway main,  
Unto the Sepulchre of Christ he sped,  
And other holy places visited  
With uttermost devotion. But, while he  
Lingered the time in Accon by the sea,  
Constrained to labour with his hands, he wove  
Baskets of reeds, for folk made use thereof  
Who sojourned there, and through the town withal  
Bare water, or dead men to burial :  
By the which means he earned him daily bread

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And other needs. If this might not bestead,  
To our Lord's table he returned once more,  
And of the folk asked alms from door to door,  
From thence returning homeward, at the last  
He to our Lady of the Angels passed.

III

HOW HE WAS MARVELLOUSLY FED  
UPON THE JOURNEY

SAINT ANGELS and Saint Nicholas du Bar  
He visited devoutly, and, afar  
Roaming the earth, did men and women draw  
With exhortation to God's love and awe,  
And to do penance for their sins.

One day,  
Being sore spent with hunger and the way,  
He fell asleep, as do way-wearied folk,  
And, when from out that slumber he awoke,  
Lo ! of God's bounty found beside his head,  
Whereby he was refreshed and comforted.

## IV

HOW HE SOUGHT MARTYRDOM  
BEYOND THE SEA

Now, seeing his fold increase and multiply,  
My Lord Saint Francis longed right earnestly  
Some Brethren to the Saracens to send  
And other misbelievers, to the end  
They preach to them, nor, if need be, deny  
For the profession of the Faith to die.  
And seeing that Brother Giles was apt therein  
And meet, he sent him to the barbarous kin :  
Into whose country when at length he came,  
And to a town that Tunis hath to name,  
A certain Saracen of high repute  
For holiness, who had long time been mute,  
Now 'gan to speak and cry aloud to them :  
'Here cometh who shall sever, root and stem,  
Both law and prophet : therefore my rede saith  
That with the sword this man be done to death.'  
Then from the Paynim-folk loud clamour rose  
And uproar ; and the Christians—to wit those  
With whom the Brothers now were sojourning,  
And Brother Giles among them—for this thing  
Fearing to die, did with much violence  
Back to their vessel drive the Brothers thence,  
Nor with the Paynim suffered them have speech.  
To whom the Brothers from the ship 'gan preach.

And boldly, as the Spirit of God sufficed,  
Aflame with fire divine, bade turn to Christ,  
Earnestly longing for the Faith to die.  
But, since the Christians hindered them, whereby  
They could not compass that they came to do,  
Unto Saint Francis' home once more they drew.

## V

HOW HE WAS MIRACULOUSLY RESTORED FROM COLD TO WARMTH;  
AND OF OTHER MATTERS

Now seeing that Brother Giles was perfected  
In virtues and in grace, Saint Francis said  
Unto the other Brethren : ‘Here,’ quoth he,  
‘My Knight of the Round Table ye may see.’  
When Brother Giles would of Saint Francis  
know

What he would have him do, or whither go,  
The Saint replied to him : ‘Go wheresoe’er  
Thou wilt, my son, thy place awaits thee there.’  
Thus then for three days wandering at will,  
He could not rest in spirit or be still  
With such large liberty. For which thing’s  
sake

Unto Saint Francis he returned, and spake :  
‘My Father, send me whereso’ seems thee best,  
But send me, sith my conscience cannot rest  
So loosely bound.’ Him then he bade anon  
To Fabrione’s hermitage begone,  
Nigh to Perugia. And upon that road  
Barefoot and clad but in one coat he strode,  
Albeit ’twas winter and a mighty frost.

Quoth one to him : ‘ The gait forsooth thou go’st  
I would not go to win me Paradise.’

At the which word such coldness as of ice  
Took hold upon him, he came near to die.  
So he bethought him in his agony  
How that our Lord Christ Jesu erst did go  
Barefoot and naked, and, thus thinking, lo !  
Anon waxed warm again ; whereat he paid  
Honour to God most high, that without aid  
Of earthly fire that sudden warmth he felt.

But, when for many a year he there had dwelt,  
One day, remembering him of sin, he hied  
Into the wood, and summoned to his side  
A Brother, and, stripping, o’er his neck let fall  
A rope, and bade the Brother therewithal  
Hale him to his own place ; and, at the place  
Arriving thus, he cried aloud in face  
Of all the Brethren : ‘ Brothers mine,’ quoth he,  
‘ Be merciful, be merciful, to me  
A sinner ! ’ And, seeing him in this naked trim,  
The Brothers all ’gan weep, and said to him :  
‘ Here, Father, is thy tunic.’ He replied :  
‘ Unworthy am I, unworthy to abide  
Among the Minor Brothers ! It nathless  
Will I receive in mine unworthiness,  
As a dear alms-gift, an ye grant it so.’

Now Brother Giles made little huts, I trow,  
To house the cups and caskets that he wrought,  
Which with his fellow to the town he brought,  
And therewith purchased all that they did need

Of food and raiment. At that time indeed  
Leisure so served for handicraft, that he  
Did clothe a Brother, and for that charity  
Besought him, whensoe'er the giver lay  
Resting or sleeping, for his soul to pray.

## VI

HOW A CERTAIN PRIEST CALLED  
HIM HYPOCRITE

ONE day, returning from a certain place,  
And by a church now passing, to his face  
A priest cried ‘ Hypocrite ! ’ and at the word  
So grieved was Brother Giles that, having heard,  
He could not hold from weeping ; in which grief  
A Brother found him, and inquired in brief :  
‘ Wherefore so sad ? ’ ‘ A priest hath said,’ quoth he,  
‘ I am a hypocrite.’ ‘ Think’st so to be,  
Therefore ? ’ the other cried. ‘ Methinks at least  
Priests lie not, and methinks he is a priest.’  
To whom that friar : ‘ My Father, sooth to say,  
The thoughts of men can oftentimes go astray,  
And are not as the thoughts of God,’ he said :  
Which heard, the heart in him was comforted.

## VII

HOW HE WEPT FOR BROTHER ELIAS;  
AND OF HIS PROMPT OBEDIENCE

WHENAS to Brother Giles the tale was told  
 How Brother Elias tripped, who was of old  
 Chief Minister, but now a rebel found—  
 Banned of the Pope—he threw him on the ground,  
 Lamenting sore, and, asked thereof, did say :  
 ‘ Thus I abase me lowly as I may  
 For Brother Elias, who was erst so great,  
 But now is fallen from his high estate  
 Through pride and disobedience.’

It befell  
 Once at Agello’s House he chanced to dwell,  
 And from the said place had gone forth, when lo !  
 Called by the Minister in Chief to go  
 And seek him at Assisi, he would not  
 To his own place return, but from the spot  
 Whereon he stood, when he that summons heard,  
 Addressed him to his journey at the word :  
 And this he did but for obedience’ sake,  
 Whose holy fetter he still feared to break.

## VIII

HOW HE BADE A BROTHER PREFER  
OBEDIENCE TO PRAYER

ONCE on a time a Brother in his cell  
Was praying, when the Guardian, as befell,  
Bade him arise seek bread for alms-giving.  
And so indignant was he at this thing  
That unto Brother Giles, who chanced to bide  
Then in that Convent, having straightway hied,  
'Father, while praying in my cell,' he said,  
'The Guardian bade me forth to quest for bread ;  
But to my thinking, maugre his behest,  
To pray seems better than for bread to quest.'  
Made answer Brother Giles : ' Of prayer, I ween,  
Brother, yet know'st thou naught : true prayer is e'en  
To do his will who is set over thee.'  
And once, ' It is a sign of pride,' said he,  
' To yoke thee to Obedience, and anon  
Draw back again, some path to enter on,  
Which seems to thee more perfect. Even so  
Is an obedient Brother like, I trow,  
To a good knight, and set on a good horse,  
Who midmost of his foes doth run a course,  
But can of none be wounded. Therewithal  
A disobedient Brother I will call  
A sorry knight set on a sorry horse,  
Who lightly by his enemies perforce

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Is wounded, and borne headlong to the ground  
And slain, or in perpetual durance bound.'

Of such devotion was this Brother Giles,  
Of grace so nurtured, that he spake at whiles  
With angels, and of a good monk would say,  
Above all gifts the best is to obey.

## IX

HOW HE HEALED A CERTAIN MAN  
GRIEVOUSLY DISEASED

ONCE Brother Giles upon the highway met  
One riding toward Assisi, there to let  
Hew off his leg, for a sore malady  
He had, whereof no healing else could be  
Save by the knife. And he with eyes abrim  
Showed it to Brother Giles, and begged of him  
To sign the Cross upon the sore ; who now,  
With ruth and pity touched, did humbly bow  
And kiss the wound, and full devoutly trace  
The sign o' the Cross thereon. In a brief space  
The sick man, healed, and thanking God for this,  
Back to his house returned in mighty bliss.

## X

HOW A MASTER IN THEOLOGY  
HUSHED HIS PREACHING AT  
THE BIDDING OF BROTHER  
GILES

ONE time a Master in theology,  
The which an English Brother chanced to be,  
Was preaching at Saint Damian's House before  
Saint Clare and Brother Giles, and had no more  
Than a brief space launched forth upon his way,  
When with much fervour Brother Giles did say :  
' Hold, Master ! for myself to preach am fain ' :  
Whereat he ceased, and Brother Giles amain -  
' Gan utter of God's word the honeyed flow ;  
Then, in brief space, to the said Master : ' Lo !  
Finish,' quoth he, ' the theme thou didst begin.'  
And he took up his argument therein,  
And ended. Which when Sister Clare had seen,  
With a glad heart she cried : ' This day, I ween,  
Our Father Francis hath his heart's desire,  
Who whilome said to me : " I do aspire  
In our Lord's name my Brother-Clerks to see  
Attain such fullness of humility,  
That, if a lay-Brother to preach be fain,

The Master in theology refrain  
From preaching at his summons, and give o'er."  
I tell you, Brothers mine, the Master more  
Hath edified me, who did thus refrain,  
Than had I seen the dead made quick again.'

## XI

HOW BROTHER GILES EARNED HIS  
LIVING BY THE LABOUR OF HIS  
HANDS

WHEN he was sent to Rome, and sojourned there,  
E'en as he set before him when whilere  
He joined the Order, fain would he therein  
Live by the labour of his hands, and win  
For the said purpose sure accomplishment.  
First before all then to hear Mass he went  
Devoutly, and thereafter to the wood  
Hied him, which three miles from the city stood  
And faggots thence upon his shoulders brought  
And took no money for his wage, nor aught  
Save things folk need to live by. And one day  
He met a woman on his homeward way,  
Would buy of him ; and, done their bargaining,  
Unto her house the faggots he must bring.  
Then, seeing him one of the devout, when she  
Would have o'erpaid her promise, ' Nay,' quoth he,  
' Right loth were I to be the thrall of greed ' ;  
Nor only would not at her hand be fee'd  
Beyond their bargain, but therefrom withdrew  
The half of that which was his lawful due.  
Then much the woman marvelled, and henceforth  
In high devotion held him. Be its worth  
How vile soe'er, nathless he had no shame

Of that he wrought, so he might do the same  
Untainted of dishonour, even as when  
In vintage-time he holp the husbandmen  
Pluck off the grapes, and to the winepress bear,  
And tread them. Passing once the city-square,  
He met a man who fain his help had hired  
For gathering walnuts ; but the task required  
He boggled at for tallness of the trees.  
Nathless a covenant was pight that these  
Should share the nuts betwixt them. Wherefore he,  
Armed with the holy sign, did climb the tree,  
And beat the nuts off, and received his share ;  
Which being too many in his lap to bear,  
He doffed his tunic, the sole weed he wore,  
And, hood and sleeves tied wallet-wise, did pour  
The nuts therein, and, on bare shoulders slung,  
Haled thence, to mete them needy folk among.  
In harvest-time with other poor he went  
Gleaning the corn-ears, and, were any bent  
On giving him of the grain a handful free,  
He would refuse it, for 'in sooth,' said he,  
'No barn have I my harvesting to hold' :  
And, what thus gleaned he, to the poor he  
doled.

One day when he was at the monastery  
Of the Four Saints, which to the house stood nigh  
Where he was sojourning, it so befell  
The baker of the monks in that hostel  
Sought one to bolt his flour, and made a pact  
With Brother Giles to do it, that for this act,

And carrying water, and eke helping bake,  
He should seven loaves to his own portion take.

From every task he spared a space to say  
His Hours ; and having for the monks one day  
Gone to fetch water from San Sisto's well,  
A man, who begged of him to drink a spell,  
Met him on his return ; and he replied :  
‘ ‘Tis meet the monks, ere thou, be satisfied’ :  
Whereat the man waxed wroth with him, and spake  
Injurious words. Then Brother Giles did take  
The monks their water, and returned, distressed  
Rather for that wild tumult in his breast  
Who asked of him to drink, than for the mock  
Uttered against himself—so took the crock  
To the said well, and filled, and when he came  
To his abode who spake the words of shame,  
Said : ‘ Here is water ; drink and spare no whit,  
Giving to whom thou wouldest.’ He, hearing it,  
Pricked to the very heart, his pardon prayed  
For those injurious words which he had said,  
And, being freely pardoned, from that day  
Did honour and high reverence to him pay.

## XII

HOW HE WROUGHT FOR HIS OWN  
LIVING IN A CARDINAL'S PALACE

WHEN the holy Father at Rieti was,  
Frascati's bishop, Cardinal Nicholas,  
For many shining marks of sanctity  
Desiring to have Brother Giles anigh,  
Fondly besought him at his house to bide,  
And be by him with daily food supplied.  
Now touching his abode he answered yea,  
But, as for all things needful day by day,  
Take them he would not, sith by toil of hand  
He fain would live, as of the prophet-band  
Spake David : ' When that thou shalt eat,' saith he,  
' The labour of thine hand, O well is thee ! '  
This too Saint Francis taught, and caused be writ  
In Rule and Testament, confirming it,  
That all the Brethren labour loyally,  
And that the wage of this their labour be  
The food men live by. Prayed him then my Lord  
The Cardinal at least at the same board  
To eat with him, and therein he obeyed.  
Wherefore each morn he gat him forth to aid  
Pick olives, or some other task, and so  
To sate his need he daily earned enow.  
And at the board of the said Cardinal,  
Oft as he sat him down, he therewithal

Brought bread that he had won with his brow's  
sweat,  
And put before him, and thereof did eat.  
One day it chanced there fell so great a rain,  
That Brother Giles might win not forth to gain  
His bread, as he was wont: whereat did say  
The Cardinal: 'O Brother Giles, to-day  
Needs must thou of my viands eat, I trow.'  
And Brother Giles, for that day pondering how  
Somewhat to earn, did to the kitchen wend,  
And thus the cook accosted: 'Wherefore, friend,  
Hast thou so foul a kitchen?' 'For that I,'  
Quoth he, 'have none to cleanse it.' By and by  
At eating-time to table he did bring  
His bread, won from the cook for furbishing  
The kitchen: which when saw the Cardinal,  
He marvelled much, and was ill-pleased withal,  
Thus baulked of his desire. And the next day,  
As on the day before, the rain had sway;  
And, even as then, so now bespeak him must  
The Cardinal. But he, perceiving rust  
Upon the house-knives, to the pantler said  
He fain would scour and whet them; and he made  
His bargain for two loaves, and so did whet  
And scour them, and on that day likewise ate  
Of his own toil. Whate'er the task, his part  
He bore full willingly with cheerful heart.

## XIII

## HOW BROTHER GILES WAS MIRACULOUSLY PROVIDED WITH THINGS NEEDFUL

THEREAFTER Brother Giles, Lent drawing nigh,  
Fain to some solitary place would hie,  
Wherein his spirit might find rest. And so  
He craved leave of the Cardinal to go :  
But of his going being ill-content,  
The Cardinal waxed sore impatient,  
And said to him : ‘ But whither wouldest be gone ? ’  
Nathless he gat him forth, and journeying on  
Came to a certain church of Saint Lawrence,  
Perched on a mountain, and, not far from thence,  
A ruined village, left forlorn of men.  
The people of that country bore, as then,  
No reverence for the friars, nor was their name  
Known in the region : for which cause the same  
Had not their needs replenished. Furthermore,  
At the said time there was a famine sore,  
But all the hope of Brother Giles was stayed  
Upon our Lord. A three days’ tarriance made  
He and his fellows there ; and, a great snow  
Falling on earth, by no means durst they go  
Forth from the place. And, seeing they could not  
win  
Their bread by labour, nor by alms therein,

As was his wont, he to his fellow said :  
‘ Now, Brother, summon we our Lord to aid,  
And in a loud voice crave of Him that He  
Vouchsafe in our so great necessity  
Be pitiful to us ! ’ And therewithal  
He cited an ensample to recall  
How certain monks, who were in bitter case,  
With a good courage prayed our Lord for grace,  
And He gave ear to them. ‘ So, even as they,  
We in like fashion to our Lord must pray  
“ Have pity on us ! ” ’ And for their misery  
They reverently besought a remedy.  
And our Lord, who is pitiful and kind,  
Heeding their faith’s devotion, put in mind  
A man, who wist not any lodged therein,  
Unto the selfsame village for to win.  
So to himself he said : ‘ I will e’en fare  
Unto Saint Lawrence’ Church, if haply there  
Be of God’s gentlefolk,’ and went in fine,  
And therewithal took with him bread and wine.  
Then, seeing they were so sore bestead, they prayed  
The man, who thither came, vouchsafe his aid,  
For our Lord’s love, to their necessity ;  
And he, by inspiration from on high,  
With tenderest pity moved, did bread provide  
To fill their need through all that Lenten tide.  
And Brother Giles, perceiving that this thing  
Did of our Lord’s grace and compassion spring,  
Spake to his fellow : ‘ Brother, we have prayed  
Our Lord thus far that He would grant us aid.

And have been heard of Him in our distress:  
Now it behoves us render thanks no less,  
And pray for those that be our alms-bringers.'  
So day and night for them they offered prayers,  
And for all Christian folk. And our Lord shed  
Such grace on Brother Giles, that many, led  
By his ensample, did the world forsake,  
And of our holy Rule the habit take.  
The remnant, who might naught attain hereto,  
At home for our Lord's love did penance do.

## XIV

HOW HE CHID THE SLOTHFUL  
BROTHERS, WHO PREACHED, BUT  
PRACTISED NOT

E'EN as from sluggardy himself he fled,  
 So thereof others he admonishèd  
 Full sharply : and, sith many a man he knew  
 Who preached the doctrine that he shunned to do,  
 Would say : ' If thou dost practise the good deed  
 Thou know'st and preachest, great shall be thy  
 meed.

He, that within his vineyard thee receives  
 To gather grapes, doth not forbid the leaves.  
 Better a million times 'twill thee bestead  
 To teach thyself than all the world,' he said.  
 ' Bow the head oft, wouldst thou much wisdom  
 ken ;

A peerless preacher is the meek of men :  
 And what is meekness ? freely to allow  
 Their due to others. In preaching do not thou  
 Too much, too finely, or too roughly, speak,  
 But hit the mean.' Anon : ' Tis far to seek  
 From flying to feeding bird,' he said and sighed.

Once Brother Giles unto a man replied,  
 Who seemed to boast him of his lore : ' If all  
 The earth to one man's heritage should fall,  
 And he not tilled it, what fruit would he win ?

And to another a small plot, wherein  
For self and neighbour he task well the plough,  
Would he not reap thereof ? So trust not thou  
Thy lore : for were the lore of the whole earth  
Thine, and untaught of thee, 'twere nothing worth.'

## XV

HOW IT BEHOVETH MEN TO WORK  
WORTHILY, AND SERVE GOD

A CERTAIN lord, his labouring folk hard by,  
One time was standing in his vineyard nigh  
The place where Brother Giles was sojourning,  
When he 'gan chide them for much parleying ;  
Saying : ' Work, work, nor be so rife of word ! '  
And Brother Giles, this utterance having heard,  
In fervour of soul did from the chapel stride,  
And ' Hark ye, Brother-pulpiters,' he cried,  
‘ “ Work, work,” quoth this man, “ “ nor so word-rife  
be ! ” ’

Another time, ‘ Religious ship,’ quoth he,  
‘ Is split in twain ; let him escape who can ! ’  
Yea, once so high the tide of fervour ran,  
That ‘ Paris, Paris,’ he exclaimed, ‘ why, why,  
Saint Francis’ Order dost thou do to die ? ’

Chancing a quail’s note and a dove’s to hear,  
Once quoth the Saint : ‘ O quail, my lady dear,  
Fain would I thee come hearken, the Lord’s praise  
Rehearsing—fain be mindful of thy lays ;  
For not “ there there ” thou sayest, but “ here  
here ” ;  
As if thou’dst say “ here and not otherwhere  
Work and be worthy, where thy lot is thrown ” :  
O sister-dove, how beauteous is thy moan ! ’

A certain friar there came to him one day,  
Saying the Brothers did such labour lay  
Upon him, that he gat no time for prayer:  
And therefore craved he liberty to fare  
Unto a hermitage, wherein to bide,  
And serve our Lord more calmly. He replied:  
' If thou shouldest to the king of France, and pray  
A thousand pounds of him, would he not say:  
" Sure thou art mad ! or what hast wrought for me,  
That I a thousand pounds should give to thee ? "  
But if a man some mighty deed had done  
Aforetime in his service, such an one  
Might boldly crave his bounty. So too thou,  
Wouldst ask and have, must first to labour bow:  
For one deed, done for others, doth obtain  
More merit than for thine own pleasure twain.'  
Withal he said to him : ' Was once a wight  
Who had nor hands, nor feet, nor eyeballs' sight,  
To whom another came, and " What," saith he,  
" Wouldst give, should one restore thy hands to  
thee ? "  
" No less than all my substance," he replies:  
" And what to him who should illume thine eyes ? "  
" Him all my life-days would I serve full fain."  
See now, my Brother,' quoth the Saint again,  
' Thee doth our Lord with eyes, hands, feet, endow—  
All bodily goods and ghostly—yet wouldest thou  
Not serve Him.'

Once a Brother asked how he  
So spiritual and devout of life could be:

And Brother Giles replied : ‘ Why doth one field  
More plenteous increase than his neighbour’s yield ?  
Because forsooth the tiller of this soil  
More carefully hath tilled it, with more toil,  
Than hath its lord the other. Therewithal,  
Full many a blow must on the anvil fall,  
Or ere the iron unto perfection fit  
The shape whereto the craftsman willeth it :  
And, as an idler, without toil or pain  
Wouldst thou to sovereignty of soul attain ? ’

A Brother told him he had oftentimes striven  
For grace, which nathless ne’er to him was given :  
And Brother Giles replied : “ Who in this power  
Hath all things, He may give thee as thy dower  
To-morrow what to-day He doth deny.”

Again, a Brother said : ‘ How can I fly  
Temptation ? ’ ‘ From temptation,’ he replies,  
‘ Who flieth, he from life eternal flies.  
For no man shall be crowned, save him alone,  
Who in this world hath loyal battle done.’

## XVI

HOW BROTHER GILES SAW CERTAIN  
BROTHERS SUFFERING TOR-  
MENTS IN HELL

A BROTHER, whom a trance had ravishèd,  
Came joyfully to Brother Giles, and said :  
‘ Father, good news I bring thee ; I have been  
In vision rapt to hell, and there have seen  
No Minor Brother.’ Brother Giles replied :  
‘ I trow full well that thou hast none espied,  
Full well I trow it.’ And, as that word he spoke,  
Himself too was entranced, and, when he woke,  
This Brother asked him, as his ghostly sire,  
‘ Think’st thou there be no Brothers in hell-fire ?  
Else, if there be, wherefore beheld I none ? ’  
And, as from God, he answered : ‘ Therefore, son,  
Thou saw’st them not, because thou didst not win  
To the full depth of that abyss wherein  
Suffer those hapless ones, who, without deed  
Or Rule’s observance, wore the holy weed. .  
For, as the saintly Brothers with the blest  
Of heaven, their fellows, in great glory rest,  
So with their fellow-sinners, housed of hell,  
The sinful Brothers in sore anguish dwell.’

## XVII

CONCERNING HIS MORTIFICATION  
OF THE FLESH

Now Brother Giles would ever mortify  
His flesh to serve the spirit, and thereby  
The flower of purity did taintless hold.  
For, as quoth Brother Gratian, of old  
His most devout companion, he but ate  
Once, and that sparely, and when day was late.  
For ‘ As the beast that loveth dung, e'en so  
Our flesh is : flesh is champion of the Foe :  
Yea, like the swine that hasteth to the mire,  
Wherein to wallow is his one desire,  
Such is the flesh,’ he said. Another time  
A Brother asking how from carnal crime  
To guard us, Brother Giles replied : ‘ Whoe'er  
Or a great stone, or a great beam, would bear,  
Needs more of craft than force to hale it by.  
Like to a mirror clear is chastity,  
Which by a breath is dimmed. A man may not  
Come to close fellowship with God, I wot,  
If in things carnal be his heart's delight :  
For, turn them up or down, to left or right,  
Naught else but filth and loathliness thou'l see.’  
‘ Of all the virtues, chastity for me ! ’  
One time he cried. Whereat a friar did say :  
‘ But is not charity more great perfay ? ’

And Brother Giles replied: ‘ What is more chaste  
Than charity ? ’ And oftentimes, as he paced  
Singing, would chant: ‘ O sacred chastity,  
What art thou ? such thou art, so great and high  
Of quality and stature, that no whit  
Can fools discern of thee.’ ‘ What call you it—  
This chastity ? ’ one time a Brother spake:  
And Brother Giles thereto did answer make:  
‘ This call I chastity—the senses all  
In ward, with God for warder, to enthral.’  
And, as he thus praised chastity, up-spoke  
A wedded wight: ‘ Lo ! from all woman-folk  
I hold, save one: mine own sufficeth me.’  
And he made answer: ‘ Seemeth it to thee,  
In his own tavern drinking to excess,  
A man thereby commits not drunkenness ? ’

## XVIII

## OF HIS EXCEEDING PURE CHASTITY

ONCE on a time a woman's voice he heard  
 That called him ; and thereat within him stirred  
 Such sore temptation of the flesh, as ne'er  
 Aforetime had he proven. Howsoe'er,  
 Perceiving it to be the devil's trick,  
 Back to his orisons he hied full quick,  
 With rigorous fasts and cruel stripes, whereby  
 He gat good quittance of his enemy.

A certain Brother-priest was once beset  
 With very grievous temptings, and, while yet  
 Him seemed that naught might oust them, with a sigh  
 To his own heart he said : ' Would God that I  
 Could seek out Brother Giles, and to him tell  
 This my temptation ! ' But, for he did dwell  
 Too far aloof, he gat not leave to go  
 And speak with him. And, as he slumbered, lo !  
 The saint was in his vision, and much aid  
 He had from him, and solace ; for he said :  
 ' How with a dog wouldest deal, that made at thee  
 To bite thee ? ' ' I should strike, to make him flee,'  
 He answered. And the Saint bespake him : ' Go,  
 And do with thy temptation even so ! '  
 Who, strengthened thus with solace and good rede,

Prayed Brother Giles with our Lord intercede  
For him. And, when from slumber he awoke,  
That Brother of the said temptation's yoke  
Felt wholly lightened, as he certified  
To Brother Giles' companion. Some beside,  
Who, tempted their religious vows to spurn,  
Back to the world were minded to return,  
Won by his ceaseless warnings oftentimes owed  
To Brother Giles deliverance. On the road  
A man, who did a woman walking spy,  
One time was tempted, and, as he drew nigh,  
Felt goadings of the flesh, but, with great strength  
Resisting, looked not, and, come close at length  
Looked, and, beholding her that she was old,  
Lost the temptation : which when he was told,  
Quoth Brother Giles : ' Nay, dear my friend, I ween  
Thou hast lost the battle : better hadst thou been  
Fired with temptation, and not looked at her ! '

With Brothers Ruffino once and Juniper  
And Simon being assembled, Brother Giles  
Asked them : ' How deal ye with the tempter's wiles  
Touching the flesh ? ' And Brother Ruffino said :  
' On God and eke on Mary, blessed Maid,  
I call, and cast me to the earth a spell.'  
And Brother Giles replied : ' I take thee well.'  
Next bade he Brother Simon to confess ;  
Who answered : ' Of the sin's foul hideousness  
And work o' the flesh I fall a-pondering,  
And thus do rid me of the tempter's sting.'  
' I take thee well,' quoth Brother Giles, ' and thou.

O Brother Juniper ? ' He answered : ' How ?  
" Go, get ye hence," I greet them, soon as spied ;  
" The house is taken." ' Brother Giles replied :  
' I hold with thee the safer course is so,  
Touching this sin—to fly, not fight, the foe.'

## XIX

## OF HIS VOLUNTARY POVERTY

Now Brother Giles a mighty zealot was  
Of poverty, and for the selfsame cause  
With but one tunic was content, and stayed  
In a poor cell of mud and wattles made,  
And all excess did in abhorrence hold.  
And once of Brother Elias hearing told  
How at Assisi he was building fair  
A church full large and sumptuous, and had there  
A marble box where they the money kept  
For the said work—hearing thereof, he wept  
Full piteously, and thus brake forth in speech :  
‘ Had I a house so spacious as would reach  
Hence to Assisi, ’twould suffice me well  
In a small nook of one full small to dwell ’ ;  
Then unto Brother Leo spake and said  
Weeping : ‘ If thou be numbered with the dead,  
Go, break this marble box, which to contain  
Men’s offerings for yon vast and sumptuous fane  
In holy poverty’s despite is set :  
But, if thou liv’st, let be, for ill the fret  
Couldst bear of Brother Elias.’ At which word  
This Brother Leo waxed mighty in the Lord,  
And with a Brother’s aid the box did break.  
And Brother Giles, this done, for reverence’ sake  
Toward Saint Francis, there to quit his vows,

Unto Assisi went : and through the House  
Anon the Brothers led him, and displayed  
The sumptuous buildings they had reared and made,  
As though they gloried in them : the which gear  
Well pondering, Brother Giles exclaimed : ‘ Give ear,  
My Brothers ! I tell you naught is here amiss,  
Save that ye have no womankind.’ At this  
The Brothers were sore offended, and did take  
The word in dudgeon. But again he spake :  
‘ Well wot ye, Brothers, that ye are e’en as free  
From chastity as poverty to flee ;  
Since therefore poverty ye thus put by,  
Why not as well be done with chastity ? ’

## XX

HOW BROTHER GILES DISPELLED  
 THE DOUBTS OF A PREACHER  
 CONCERNING THE VIRGINITY OF  
 OUR LADY

A MIGHTY master of the Brotherhood  
 Of preachers many a year, it chanced, had stood  
 In sore doubt touching the virginity  
 Of the blest Mother of Jesu Christ, Mary  
 The Virgin. A hard matter seemed in troth  
 This, that the blessed Virgin should be both  
 Mother at once and maid. Of the said doubt  
 Nathless it grieved him: so he cast about  
 For some enlightened spirit to win him free,  
 And hearing tell of Brother Giles that he  
 With light was gifted to the uttermost,  
 Set forth to seek him. And the Holy Ghost  
 To Brother Giles his journey and intent  
 And strife of soul revealing, he too went  
 Along the way to meet him, and, while yet  
 Each drew toward the other, ere they met,  
 Bespake him, striking with his staff the earth,  
 ' O Brother preacher, Virgin ere the birth !'  
 And, where he struck, a lily fair and tall  
 From out the ground sprang straightway. There-  
 withal

A second time he smote it, and did say :  
‘ O Brother, Virgin on the bearing-day ! ’  
And, as at first, a second lily sprang.  
A third time striking, from his lips out-rang :  
‘ O Brother preacher, Virgin after birth ! ’  
And, as he spake, a third up-sprang from earth.  
Which done, of a sudden without stop or stay  
Departed Brother Giles upon his way ;  
And the said Brother, there and then released  
Of his temptation, from all doubting ceased.

## XXI

HOW BROTHER GILES AND LOUIS  
KING OF FRANCE MET, AND  
EACH OF OTHER DISCERNED  
THE HEART'S SECRETS

SAINT LOUIS, King of France, was minded well  
To visit holy shrines, and, hearing tell  
Of Brother Giles' great sanctity, anon  
Resolved in heart to seek him. Whereupon,  
Arrived Perugia, to the Brothers' home  
He as a pilgrim with few folk did come,  
And asked for Brother Giles right urgently.  
To him then straightway did the porter hie,  
Saying a pilgrim stood before the gate,  
Asking to see him. Now who thus did wait  
He through the Holy Spirit wist full well.  
So with all speed he gat him from his cell,  
And to the outer door ran forth in haste.  
And there they kissed each other and embraced  
With marvellous devotion, knee to knee  
Bending, as though long time familiarly  
Each had been known to other : and, shewing thus  
Of their great love the token marvellous,  
They parleyed not together nor had speech,  
But in unbroken silence each from each  
Parted. And when Saint Louis went his way,  
His fellows bid a certain Brother say

Who it had been that in such loving wise  
Did Brother Giles embrace. And he replies  
That it was Louis, of fair France the King,  
Who fain, his pilgrimage accomplishing,  
Would visit Brother Giles. Thereat were they  
Sore vexèd with the saint, and 'gan to say  
Among themselves, complaining: 'Tell us why,  
O Brother Giles, unto a king so high  
As is the King of France, who came to see  
And haply hearken some good word of thee,  
Thou spak'st no word at all ?' He answerèd :  
'Marvel not, dear my Brothers, that we said  
Naught to each other ; for the light divine  
Of heavenly wisdom shewed his heart to mine,  
So soon as we embraced, and mine to his.  
And in that mirror which eternal is,  
Sith every thought stood imaged clear as day  
That I to him, or he to me, would say,  
Without the office of word, lips, or tongue,  
A deeper solace in our soul up-sprung  
Than if we had spoken : nay, had we so willed,  
The utterance of the thoughts, that in us thrilled,  
Had wrought discomfort rather. Sooth to say,  
The king with wondrous solace went his way.'

## XXII

OF THE COUNSEL WHICH HE GAVE  
TO BROTHER JAMES

JAMES of La Massa, he that served the part  
Of a lay Brother, was full pure of heart ;  
Companion of Saint Clare, and comrade he  
To divers of Saint Francis' company.  
And, sith he had this grace, to be at whiles  
Rapt from the body, fain of Brother Giles  
Would he take counsel, and by him be taught  
How in receiving the said grace he ought  
To act and bear him : who replied in few :  
' Diminish naught therefrom, add naught thereto,  
And shun the crowd, so far as in thee lies.'  
Quoth he ' What meanest thou ? ' and he replies :  
' Whenas man's thought is ushered to the height  
Where dwells of grace divine the glorious light,  
It must e'en shun through pride or negligence  
To add thereto, or minish aught from thence,  
And labour to love solitude, that so  
The said grace safely may abide and grow.'

## XXIII

OF THE COUNSEL WHICH HE GAVE  
TO A BROTHER CONCERNING  
THAT WHICH IS MOST PLEASING  
TO GOD

A BROTHER once to Brother Giles did kneel,  
Imploring him beseech our Lord reveal  
What he might do to pleasure Him the most;  
Whom thus next morn did Brother Giles accost:  
' I will e'en tell thee, but would chant the way';  
So took his staff, and made as if to play  
Upon a viol, while these words alone—  
' One unto one,' he sang, ' one unto one,'  
Over and over, saying to him: ' So do,  
And thou shalt please God.' Since the Brother knew  
No whit, he vowed, the meaning of that word,  
Quoth Brother Giles again: ' Wouldst please the Lord,  
Lo ! without pause or paltering, as is fit,  
One soul to one God give thou and commit.'

## XXIV

OF THE COUNSEL WHICH HE GAVE  
TO BROTHER GRATIAN

To Brother Giles did Brother Gratian say,  
Speaking of God, as ever was his way :  
' To preach and counsel others well I wot,  
But how to act, meseems this know I not ;  
Yea, and albeit a many things I know,  
Which best behoves me naught have I to shew,  
Nor by what doing most may please our Lord.  
Wherefore of that thou deem'st vouchsafe me word ;  
What thinkest thou ? ' Quoth Brother Giles : ' No  
way

Wilt thou please God so well as this perfay,  
That by the neck thou hang thyself aloft.'  
And Brother Gratian urgently and oft  
Beseeching him this riddle to declare,  
At last he answered : ' He that hangs in air,  
Though not in heaven, is raised from earth with eyes  
Cast ever downward. So do thou likewise.  
For thou, though not in heaven, from things of earth  
Mayst rise, and busy thee with things of worth,  
And of thyself think humbly, and though late,  
For our Lord's pity still in patience wait.'

## XXV

OF THE COUNSEL WHICH HE GAVE  
TO ONE WHO WOULD ENTER  
THE LIFE RELIGIOUS

A MAN once said to Brother Giles that he  
The holy life would enter finally :  
Who answered him : ‘ If thither thou wouldest win,  
Go quickly, slay thy parents, brothers, kin.’  
But in amaze, hands clasped, with tears that well,  
‘ O Brother Giles,’ he cried, ‘ a deed so fell—  
How could I do it ? ’ And thus did he respond :  
‘ Thou babe in understanding, art so fond  
And dull of wit, as deem that I thee bade  
Hereby to murder them with mortal blade ?  
Nay, but with mental, and in thought, I wot.  
For father, mother, whoso hateth not,  
That is, who not forsaketh—know that he  
Of Jesu Christ can ne’er disciple be.’

## XXVI

OF THE COUNSEL WHICH HE GAVE  
TO A BROTHER-COOK CONCERN-  
ING MURMURS MADE AGAINST  
HIM

A BROTHER-COOK was once right ill at ease  
For that he could not in his cooking please  
The tastes of all the Brothers, though alway  
He strove his best, so far as in him lay ;  
But one wished this thing, and another that ;  
Until to Brother Giles at last he gat  
For counsel in these matters, if so be  
He might in patience bear him peaceably.  
And Brother Giles made answer : ‘ Go, my son,  
And whensoe’er thou hear’st from anyone  
“ This cooking is ill-seasoned,” stir it round  
Once, and exclaim : “ ’Tis worth a hundred pound.”  
So shalt thou ever foil them, and so pray  
Still to be challenged in the selfsame way.’

## XXVII

## HOW HE ANSWERED TWO CARDINALS WHO ASKED HIM FOR HIS PRAYERS

Two Cardinals to Brother Giles once came  
To hear the Word of Life ; and when the same  
Would now take up their journey, they 'gan plead  
He would vouchsafe with God to intercede  
In prayer for them. But he made answer : ' Nay,  
What need, my lords, that I for you should pray,  
Who have more faith, and eke more hope, than I !'  
' How so ? ' said they : ' Because,' he made reply,  
' Whate'er of riches, honour, and success,  
This world can offer, ye indeed possess,  
And hope to win salvation ; whereas I,  
Despite all hardship and adversity,  
Fear to be lost hereafter.' By which word  
Upbuildd they to better aims. were stirred.

## XXVIII

HOW HE COMFORTED A BROTHER  
TORMENTED WITH TEMPTATION

A FRIAR, fast holden of temptation's net,  
 Oft prayed our Lord to loose him, but as yet  
 Had earned scant answer ; whereupon he hied  
 To Brother Giles for counsel, who replied :  
 ‘ Marvel not, Brother, if our Lord it please  
 That still thou fight against His enemies,  
 Who hast received such grace of Him. For lo !  
 On whom the King doth costlier arms bestow,  
 Him would he have fight bavelier.’

One time too

A Brother asked him : ‘ What thing can I do  
 That I be fain my orisons to pay ?  
 For hard of heart I feel, and loth to pray.’  
 And he made answer thus : ‘ The King, I wot,  
 Hath servants twain, one armed, the other not,  
 Whom both he bade go fight his enemies.  
 But he, which had no armour, on this wise  
 Bespoke his lord : “ Sir, as thou seest, I have  
 No armour, but for thy love's sake will brave,  
 Thus without arms, the battle.” And the King,  
 His servant's loyal faith considering,  
 Said to his ministers : “ Go ye, prepare

Good harness for my faithful knight to wear,  
And arm, and deck him with my arms' device."  
So, be a man's heart dry, hard, cold as ice,  
Touching devotion, let him nathless dare  
March boldly to the battle-field of prayer.'

## XXIX

HOW BROTHER GILES ANSWERED  
ONE WHO CRAVED COUNSEL AS  
TO ENTERING THE LIFE RE-  
LIGIOUS

WHEN one by Brother Giles would counselled be  
Of entering the religious life, quoth he :

' If a poor man should know where treasure lay  
Hid in a field, would he crave counsel, say,  
Whether to go and take it ? Much more vain  
To wait on others' counsel to attain  
The realm of heaven, that hath no bound assigned.'  
By the which warning he, resolved in mind,  
Left all his worldly substance, and straightway  
Entered the life religious.

On a day

There came to Brother Giles, as it befell,  
A certain friar who said : ' If I do well,  
I glory in't ; if evil, then and there  
Fall into sadness and, as like, despair.'

' Rightly thy sin thou ruest,' answered he,  
' Yet temperately repent, bethinking thee  
That our Lord's power doth more avail herein  
To pardon, than thy wretchedness to sin.  
Lo ! should some tiller of the furrowed plain  
Say to himself, or ere he cast the grain,  
" If now thou sowest, or bird of heaven, or beast

O' the field, will come and make thereof his feast,"  
He would sow never. But, who would fill his bin,  
Now soweth, and hereafter gathers in  
Enough for his own need. Through fear of pride  
Cease not moreover from good works,' he cried,  
'Sith ever the more part will stay by thee.'

A wise man coming to him once, said he :  
'Thinkest thou the gifts of God are great ?' 'Yea,  
yea,  
Surely,' he cried. And Brother Giles did say :  
'These words, thou'l find for grace do more avail  
Within Religion, than outside the pale.'

## XXX

## HOW GRACE AVAILETH MORE WITHIN RELIGION THAN OUTSIDE THE PALE

ONE asked of Brother Giles : ‘ Who hath his place  
Within the world—can he of God find grace ? ’  
Quoth Brother Giles : ‘ Full surely ; yet to me  
More dear would one grace in religion be,  
Than ten i’ the world. The grace religion gives  
Is lightly guarded, look you, for who lives  
Religious, of earth’s turmoil hath no share,  
Dwelling aloof from fret of worldly care,  
Which is a foe to grace. The monks also  
With loving exhortation, and fair show  
Of holy converse, draw apart from ill,  
And unto godly works provoke the will,  
And kindle. But what grace the world may give  
Is lightly lost ; and, howsoe’er he strive,  
Scarce may one keep it. Care for worldly good,  
The which is mother to disquietude,  
Hinders of grace the sweetness, and defiles ;  
And other worldlings with persuasive wiles,  
And through corrupt ensample, as perforce  
And violently, withdraw from virtue’s course,  
And drive a man, constraining him to ill.

For one, who bears him honestly, they will  
In no wise aid, but mock at and misprise ;  
While, as for such as are God's enemies,  
They chide not, but extol them. Better, then,  
One grace held safe, than at great peril ten.'

## XXXI

OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE OF  
BROTHER GILES, AND HOW HE  
WAS RAPT FROM THE BODY

AFTER his deedful life's laborious span,  
And time's shrewd buffets, changed to perfect man,  
Our Lord translated him henceforth to live  
In calm repose the life contemplative.  
So in the sixth year sith his vows were plighted,  
At Fabrione's hermitage, one night,  
Nigh to Perugia, the Lord's hand was laid  
Upon him, as full fervently he prayed ;  
And with so vast a solace was he filled,  
As certified him that our Lord had willed—  
So plain the hidden things of Christ he saw—  
His soul from out the body's frame to draw.  
There at that moment he 'gan realize  
In his own person how the body dies,  
First at the feet, then upward without stay,  
Till his soul issued from her house of clay.  
And when, returning to its mortal mate,  
That saintly spirit came to contemplate  
The eternal secrets, naught would he disclose,  
But said : ' Thrice blessed is the man who knows  
The mysteries of God, for naught is hid  
That shall not, even as our Lord shall bid,  
And when it pleases Him, to light be brought.

Certes in mine own self confide I naught ;  
Therefore, if these things must revealèd be,  
Be they revealed by others than by me ! ’  
And, sith the enemy of human kind  
Doth more molest the man of perfect mind  
Than others, after the aforesaid grace  
Vouchsafed him, soon and in the selfsame place,  
Whenas, prayer ended, he his cell had sought,  
Came to his side, a form with horror fraught,  
Satan the devil. And such vast dismay  
Seized Brother Giles, that no word might he say,  
But casting him to earth did straight beseech  
Our Lord in spirit, sith his tongue lacked speech,  
To hear him. And anon deliverance came.  
Right soon he asked Saint Francis of the same :  
‘ Father, is aught so fell that none might face  
The fear on’t for a paternoster’s space ? ’  
And the thrice blessed Francis answered : ‘ None  
Might brook the devil’s form to gaze upon,  
While half a paternoster might be said ;  
But, save that he were holpen of God’s aid,  
The man must die.’ And Brother Giles, as who  
Himself had proved the thing, believed it true.

## XXXII

HOW AT THE FIRST THE BLESSED  
FRANCIS APPEARED TO HIM,  
AND AFTERWARDS WITH BODILY  
EYES HE SAW OUR LORD JESUS  
CHRIST

ONE time when Brother Giles with his fellow  
Unto Cetona's hermitage did go,  
Where in the bishopric of Chiusi dwell  
The Brothers of Cittobolo, befell  
That the next night appeared before his eyes  
The Emperor, and in most familiar wise  
Entreated him ; which verily, said he,  
Was token of the grace and ecstasy  
That should befall him, as appeared anon :  
For when to the said hermitage he won,  
And there Saint Martin's fast of forty days  
Was duly keeping, flashed before his gaze  
My lord Saint Francis, whom he did beseech :  
‘ Father, I would that thou and I have speech  
Together.’ Quoth Saint Francis : ‘ Verily  
Search thine own heart, wouldest thou have speech of  
me.’  
Thereafter, as he happed within his cell  
Holding night-vigil for three days, ere fell  
Our Lord’s nativity, before him there  
Appeared Christ Jesu, as he strove in prayer

And fervour of devotion ; whom he saw  
With bodily eyes : and, from his words to draw  
What then he witnessed, on the spirit's eye  
There flashed, outsplendouring mere mortality,  
Something ineffable which he nor dar'd  
Nor had the skill to utter. Afterward,  
Whenas this wondrous vision was o'er-sped,  
As 'twere some other, of himself he said :  
‘ ‘Tis writ Saint Paul was rapt, but in or out  
Of his own body he himself did doubt :  
But I know one who in the flesh did see  
God plainly.’ Once too without figure he  
Spake of himself the same—to wit, that erst  
He had had faith, and in a rapture first  
Had lost it, no whit doubting whether in  
Or out o' the body. And, as he did win  
To the said vision, sudden he was filled  
With odour sweet ineffably distilled,  
And ecstasy of heart that might not be  
Sustained for weakness of humanity.  
Then deeming that to very death he bowed,  
As swooning to his end, he cried aloud,  
So that the Brothers of the monastery  
Had grievous doubt that he would straightway die ;  
In the which terror one among them hied,  
And unto Brother Giles' companion cried :  
‘ Prithee come quick ere Brother Giles be dead ! ’  
Who therewith rose and ran to him, and said :  
‘ What ails thee, Father ? ’ ‘ I but yearned,’ quoth  
he,

‘ To look upon thy face ’ : for tenderly  
He loved and trusted him, whom he had led  
From childhood in the ways of godlihead.  
To him then he revealed from first to last  
All that had happed to him ; and, that day past,  
Next morn the Brother of himself did go  
To Brother Giles, and found him full of woe,  
And weeping, and from sorrow bade refrain,  
Lest that thereby his body waste and wane.  
To whom the Saint made answer : ‘ How should I  
Not weep, who doubt I am God’s enemy ?  
For certes such compassion He hath showed  
To-me-ward, and so great a gift bestowed,  
I doubt my works accord not with His will.’  
So spake he, brooding on the vision still,  
Whereby his heart so mightily was moved.  
‘ Therefore,’ he added, ‘ heretofore I raved  
Where’er I would, and did what I would do,  
Still labouring with my hands : now all is new,  
And I must act e’en as I feel the power ;  
Whereof I fear lest any from this hour  
Ask of me that I skill not to bestow.’  
Then said his fellow : ‘ Father, sure enow  
Right good it is that aye thou hast in thee  
The fear of God ; yet shouldst thou trust that He,  
Who to His servant doth grace manifold  
Vouchsafe to have, vouchsafeth grace to hold.’  
Which answer liked the man of God full well :  
And solace of the soul unutterable,  
From the third day of our Lord’s birth-vigil

E'en to the coming of the Kings, did still  
Enfold him ; yet not ever in one stay.  
But divers seasons both of night and day ;  
Sith in good sooth man's frailty may not bear  
For long so fierce a radiance ; with which fear  
He prayed our Lord its heady force refrain,  
Unmeet for him, a simple man and plain.  
But, in like measure as himself he found  
Unworthy, so did our Lord's grace abound  
In power upon him. Wherefore he would say  
That even as on the Apostles He that day  
Did breathe the Holy Ghost, e'en so bequeathed,  
On him at last the Holy Ghost He breathed.

## XXXIII

OF A SPLENDOUR THAT FELL FROM  
HEAVEN BETWEEN BROTHER  
GILES AND HIS COMPANION

ONE night, as Brother Giles before his cell  
With his companion parleyed, lo ! there fell  
A splendour from our Lord their forms between :  
And, when his fellow asked what it might mean,  
'Take thou no heed,' he answered, 'let it pass.'  
There too a good man of religion was,  
To whom our Lord did once His secrets show.  
He, ere to Brother Giles this happened so,  
Saw in a dream that, where was set his cell,  
The sun arose, and ran his course, and fell.  
Thereafter, seeing Brother Giles, he said :  
'Sunlike his beams o'er all the world are shed.'

## XXXIV

HOW SOON AFTER THE VISION  
BROTHER GILES WAS RAPT IN SOUL

Now when the aforesaid vision he had seen,  
Oft rapt in soul was Brother Giles, I ween,  
And much alone, and seldom from his cell  
Would issue forth, the rather to guard well  
The grace of God vouchsafed him. There, I say,  
He would remain to watch and fast and pray,  
And idle converse utterly would shun,  
And murmurings: therewithal, if any one  
Spake evil of another, he would say:  
'I list not hear of others' faults perfay;  
But guard thee, Brother, guard thee, lest thou wound  
Thy conscience.' Yea, God's gifts did so abound  
Upon him, as might not be hid from sight:  
For if of God spake any, or the light  
Of divine glory, or sweet Paradise,  
Straight was he rapt, remaining on this wise  
In the same place full long, and feeling naught.  
Yea, and if hinds or children, thither brought  
By others, should cry 'Paradise,' right soon,  
Hearing that name, he fell into his swoon.  
So when the Brothers fain with him would talk,  
Name Paradise they durst not, lest he balk  
Their purpose, being lost in ecstasy.  
So too familiar converse he would fly,

And not alone with lay-folk, but with all—  
Brothers alike and clerks canonical :  
‘ Sith to soul-saving lies a surer way  
Among few folk than many,’ he would say ;  
‘ And who his own soul’s welfare tendeth best  
Best tendeth eke the welfare of the rest.’  
Thereto, ‘ By one small negligence,’ he said,  
‘ Or other fault, man oft hath forfeited  
Great grace, which after he may not regain :  
E’en as from dicers may be proven plain,  
Who, playing but for a single point, may come  
To lose the matter of a mighty sum.’

The things whereof thou tellest.' 'Yea, certes,'  
The saint made answer, 'mighty things were  
these.'

Quoth Brother Andrew, 'Where did this betide ?'  
'That, which thou seest, thou seest,' the Saint  
replied,

'And that, thou hearest, hearest.' And there fell  
Such rapture on his soul, he might not well  
Contain him. Then did Brother Andrew say :

'Tell me, hast thou ne'er been at Chiusi ?' 'Nay,'

Quoth Brother Giles, 'but all the country round

Well know I, nor in all the world have found

Aught like the mount Alvernia.' 'This, I ween,

Were wondrous, if an angel should be seen

By any,' quoth the other. 'Now at thee

I marvel, Brother Andrew, for let be

Angels, Archangels, earth and heaven, were not,

Nor any thing created, yet no jot

The less for that were Majesty Divine.

This then, methinks, would be a mighty sign—

Our Lord's appearing.' Brother Andrew said :

'Where such great things our Lord accomplishèd,  
Would that a church might stand, to mark the  
same !'

Quoth Brother Giles, 'Well spoken !' 'And what  
name,'

Asked Brother Andrew, 'should beseem it most ?'

The man of God made answer : 'Pentecost.'

Thereafter Brother Andrew did inquire :

'Think'st thou the Holy Ghost in form of fire

Hath been to eye of man made visible,  
Since in the Apostles' time He came to dwell  
In form as tongues of fire ? ' And he replied :  
' If by myself myself be glorified,  
Naught, look you, is my glory ' : and anon :  
' Let us no longer parley hereupon,  
Nor of this matter.' Which he said perchance  
Lest in his presence he be rapt in trance.  
Once too quoth Brother Giles : ' Four times have I  
Been born—first of my mother ; secondly  
I' the sacrament of baptism ; again  
The third time when I gat me forth from men  
Unto religion ; fourthly when our Lord  
Of boundless pity did such sign afford  
By His appearing.' Therewithal anon  
Said Brother Andrew : ' Should I get me gone  
To foreign lands, and one inquired of me  
If thee I knew, and how it happed with thee,  
I might make answer : " Thirty years and twain  
Lived Brother Giles, ere born, and bid attain  
Faith before birth, and after birth lost faith." '  
And Brother Giles replied : ' As thy word saith,  
So is it : nathless no faith had I before,  
Such as behoved me have ; yet, less or more,  
He hath withdrawn it ; and whoe'er,' he said,  
' Should, as behoved, his faith have perfected,  
From him would God withdraw it.' ' If then, I  
ween,'  
Said Brother Andrew, ' thou a priest hadst been,  
How, celebrating Mass, wouldest say " Credo

286 HOW HE SPAKE OF THE VISION

In unum Deum " ? Methinks " One God I know " Were, spoken by thy lips, the seemlier word.' And Brother Giles, this question having heard, With a loud voice intoning it, e'en so Made answer : ' One Almighty God I know.'

## XXXVI

CONCERNING A VISION WHICH AP-  
PEARED TO BROTHER ANDREW  
OF BURGUNDY

Now Brother Andrew, who thus dwelt apart  
With Bròther Giles, was full devout of heart,  
And prone to contemplation. And it fell  
Upon a time, he praying in his cell,  
Appeared before him one full fair to see,  
A ruddy child ; by the which vision he  
Was filled with utmost solace. So what time  
He heard the chapel-bell for vespers chime,  
Sore doubted he to join the Choir, or stay.  
‘ And yet ’tis good the creature to obey  
For love of who created him,’ he said  
Within himself, and so to Vespers sped,  
And came again, and still within his cell  
Found the fair child, who said to him : ‘ Know well,  
Hadst thou not hied thee to the Choir, straightway  
Must I have vanished from thine eyes to-day.’

## XXXVII

HOW BROTHER GILES SPOKE TO  
BONAVENTURA THE MINISTER-  
GENERAL

To Bonaventura, Minister in chief,  
Upon a time spake Brother Giles in brief :  
‘ Full many a grace, and of His goodliest,  
Hath God vouchsafed thee, Father. We, the rest,  
Plain witless folk who lack sufficiency—  
What can we do for to be saved ? ’ Quoth he :  
‘ Hath God vouchsafed no other grace to man  
Save but to love Him as the learnèd can ?  
But an old beldam may love God,’ said he,  
‘ More than a master in theology.’  
Then Brother Giles in fervour of spirit hied  
Into his garden on the city-side,  
And gan cry out : ‘ O needy eld, that art  
Simple, unlearn’d, love God with all thine heart,  
And thou shalt mightier than our Master be—  
Bonaventura.’ And, so saying, for three  
Long hours the saint stood rapt, immovable  
In ecstasy : and oft it thus befell  
That for a day’s space three half-cubits high  
He was from earth uplifted visibly.

## XXXVIII

HOW BROTHER GILES WAS RAPT  
IN THE PRESENCE OF DAME  
JACQUELINE

ONCE, when he lodged Perugia's walls within,  
 A noble Roman dame, hight Jacqueline—  
 She who had erst Saint Francis loved so well—  
 Came for to see him. Afterward befell  
 That Brother Gerard, a man right spiritual,  
 Followed, and fain would from his lips hear fall  
 Some good ensamples ; and with him, I wis,  
 Came many Brothers ; yet no word but this  
 In homely parlance Brother Giles would say :  
 ‘ A man may come, through that he can to-day,  
 To that he cannot nor hath will to do.’  
 And Brother Gerard answer made thereto,  
 Willing to lure him into further speech :  
 ‘ I marvel, Brother Giles, a man should reach  
 To that he would not, through the thing he can ;  
 For be it plainly understood that man  
 Of his own power can naught, as prove I may  
 By many reasonings. Foremost I would say  
 Aught to have power must first have entity,  
 Sith that to act doth presuppose to be ;  
 And sith to inward essence act  
 Beareth similitude, as fire in fact

Gives heat by reason that itself is hot.  
But of himself man nothing is, I wot,  
Wherefore the Apostle saith : “ Who boasts to be  
Something, when he is nothing, verily  
Deceiveth his own self.” So then ’tis plain  
Who nothing is can nothing. But again  
I prove it thus : if men can aught at all,  
Or through the soul alone it must befall,  
Or through the body, or both joined in one.  
Now man by virtue of the soul alone  
Can naught, for soul, of body reft, doth earn  
Nor merit nor demerit : so in turn  
By virtue of mere body naught can be ;  
For body, reft of soul, lacks utterly  
Both life and form, nor can to act attain,  
Sith every action is of form. Again,  
Through fellowship betwixt them can he naught,  
For this by virtue of the soul were wrought  
Which is his form : but if, as we assert,  
Soul, reft of body, be itself inert,  
Much more ’tis so when with the body knit,  
Whose gross corruption clogs and hampers it.  
And hereof, Brother Giles, this sample take :  
If, without load, an ass no way can make,  
Much less will he when laden.’ In such wise  
Did Brother Gerard twelve-fold proof devise,  
That the bystanders marvelled. Upon this  
Quoth Brother Giles : ‘ Thou speakest all amiss,  
Therefore confess thine error.’ Whereupon  
Smiling the other made confession.

But Brother Giles, seeing he did but feign,  
Said : ‘ Thou confeskest, but the words are vain,’  
And further asked him : ‘ Canst thou sing ? ’ And he  
Thereto assenting, ‘ Come, then, sing with me.’  
Then Brother Giles from out his sleeve did take  
A harp of willow, such as children make,  
Twelve-stringed, and striking on the first ’gan sing  
In rhythmic words, and so from string to string  
Annulling and confuting plea by plea  
His twelve-fold argument. ‘ And first,’ said he,  
‘ I speak not of man’s being, ere create,  
But after his creation, in that state  
Of free-will given of God, whereby he could  
Earn merit by consenting to the good—  
Consenting not, demerit. Here withal  
Thou spak’st amiss to trick me, in that Paul  
The nothingness of substance taught not there  
Nor yet of power, but merit ; as elsewhere  
“ I nothing am if I lack charity.”  
Further, I speake not of the soul set free,  
Or of the body dead, but living man,  
Who, if he will, to grace consenting can  
Good deeds accomplish, or, if he so will,  
Defying grace accomplish deeds of ill,  
Which is in sooth from good to fall away.  
And, for thou say’st this body of decay  
Weighs down the soul, the Scripture hath no voice  
To teach that it can rob her of free choice  
’Twixt good and ill—to sink or to aspire ;  
But that her apprehension and desire

Is thereby hindered, while the memory clings  
To idle traffic with corporeal things.

Whence too there follows in the selfsame place :  
“ His earthly dwelling doth man’s sense abase  
With manifold conceits ” ; by means whereof  
His soul can seek not that which is above,  
Where Jesu Christ at God’s right hand is set ;  
For that the soul’s might through the busy fret  
Of cares, and by the earth-bound body’s strength,  
Still is drawn downward.’ So too, and at length,  
He all his other pleadings did annul,  
That once more Brother Gerard owned in full  
His error. Then again spake Brother Giles :  
‘ Wouldst now that I should show thee what at  
whiles

The creature can ? ’ And with a fearsome cry  
In likeness of one damned, full grievously,  
That all who heard him trembled with affright,  
‘ Ah me ! ’ he shrieked, ‘ ah me ! unhappy wight ! ’  
Moaning and weeping. Then in other tone  
Quoth Brother Giles : ‘ Tell me, thou woful one,  
Wherefore art gone to hell ? ’ And his own voice  
Made rueful answer : ‘ For that, having choice  
To do the good which it behoved me do,  
I nathless did it not, nor would eschew  
The ill which eke was in my power to fly ;  
For which cause am I damned eternally.’  
Then, going to Brother Gerard, ‘ Hear’st thou, man,  
That there is something which the creature can ? ’  
Whereto he added : ‘ If a raindrop fall

Into the deep, doth it give name withal  
To Ocean, or from Ocean take the same ? '  
And he replied : ' In substance and in name  
The raindrop is absorbed into the sea.'  
Then Brother Giles before that company  
Was straightway rapt. Full well he knew in fine  
That human nature, which to the divine  
Is but a drop, invisible, unheard,  
Was through the incarnation of the Word  
As in a mighty sea absorbed, to wit,  
The Ocean of the Godhead's Infinite.

## XXXIX

HOW BROTHER GILES WAS RAPT IN  
PRESENCE OF THE POPE

WHEN holy Gregory, ninth Pope of the name,  
One time unto Perugia's city came,  
Hearing of Brother Giles things marvellous,  
He sent to seek him ; who within the house  
Now entering felt upon his spirit steal  
Such sweetness as at times he wont to feel  
Ere lost in ecstasy ; whereof afraid  
Lest he be rapt before the Pope he bade  
His fellow make excuse for him, as one  
Who at that hour could come not : the which done,  
That Brother to the Pope, demanding why,  
Made answer : ' Brother Giles assuredly  
Waiteth below, but, fearful to advance  
Lest in thy presence he be rapt in trance,  
Forbears to enter.' Then the holy Sire,  
As who for sight of him had shrewd desire,  
Gave swift commandment Brother Giles to bring.  
But he, as soon as they 'gan parleying,  
Stood rapt and motionless, eyes heavenward raised.  
Whereat the holy Father was amazed,  
And wist the things which he had heard were true,  
Saying : ' If thou shouldst pass from mortal view  
Before me, I shall wait no further sign  
Ere in the roll of Saints I thee enshrine.'

## XL

HOW THE POPE ASKED COUNSEL  
OF BROTHER GILES, AS THEY  
SAT AT MEAT TOGETHER

ONCE, when the holy Sire had thither hied  
Where Brother Giles upon the mountain-side  
Lodged nigh Perugia, rapt within his cell  
The Brothers found him, and made haste to tell  
The Pope, who following in their footsteps trod  
Himself to gaze upon the man of God.  
And seeing him thus lost in ecstasy,  
When with the Cardinals who stood anigh  
He had long marked him, the Pope went his way  
Amazed and mournful in that he that day  
Must lack the speech for which his heart did pine.  
Wherefore himself did summon him to dine,  
That he might talk at ease full leisurely.  
So to the Pope's house Brother Giles did hie,  
And entered and fell prostrate on his face,  
Kissing his foot: and when with kind embrace  
The Pope had greeted him, and friendly cheer,  
One of the company who stood anear  
Counselled the holy Sire to bid him sing:  
Whereat the Pope, though inly wondering  
If he had skill thereof, devoutly gave  
Command that Brother Giles should chant a stave.  
To whom the Saint made answer: 'O my Lord,

What wilt thou that I sing ?' And the said word  
Repeating with great fervour, cry on cry,  
Full swiftly through the palace he 'gan fly  
As fain to hide him, then, to quietude  
Returned, with one foot o'er the other stood  
Rapt until Vespers : and, as testified  
Both by the Pope and others at his side,  
Nor voice, nor pulse, nor feeling, any more  
Was in him. And the Pope, now grieving sore  
To be so soon baulked of his parleying,  
'Gan chide who charged him bid the Saint to sing.  
And, Brother Giles continuing in his trance,  
He said to those about him : ' By mischance  
. This man is lost to us ; but let us now  
Make proof what virtue lies within the vow  
Of his Obedience.' Therewithal this word  
He spake to Brother Giles : ' The Pope is Lord  
Of all the Minor Brothers, therefore thee  
By holy Obedience I bid come to me.'  
O marvel ! for the man who late did seem  
Reft of all motion, housed within a dream,  
Sprang straightway to the Pope with joyful cry,  
And threw him at his feet repentantly,  
Making confession of his fault. Anon  
The Pope himself upraised him, whereupon  
Quoth Brother Giles : ' Father, how is't with thee ? '  
' Well, Brother,' quoth the holy Sire ; and he :  
' How sore the burden, Father, thou dost bear !'  
Meaning thereby the load of heavy care  
That must perplex his spirit. Whereunto

The Pope made answer : ‘ That thou say’st is true,  
 Wherefore I now beseech thee lend thine aid  
 This load to lighten.’ Which when he had said,  
 Made answer Brother Giles : ‘ Right willingly  
 I do submit me to my Lord’s decree.’  
 Then quoth the Pope : ‘ Brother, thou say’st aright,  
 “ Thy yoke is easy, and thy burden light.” ’  
 Whereat the Saint uprose as if to go,  
 And parted from his side a space, and so  
 Was rapt in spirit : and this from Vesper-bell  
 E’en till a third part of the night befell :  
 Which seeing, the holy Sire was sore amazed  
 With those about him, and devoutly praised  
 A life so holy, and, the following day  
 Seeing the Saint himself again, bade lay  
 Refection for them both, as friend with friend,  
 In his own chamber. And when this had end,  
 The holy Father asked familiarly :  
 ‘ Say, what shall come to pass concerning me ? ’  
 And Brother Giles for utter humbleness  
 Forbore to answer. Quoth the Pope nathless :  
 ‘ Say then at least what it behoves me be.’  
 Then after a long time reluctantly  
 And oft himself excusing he replies :  
 ‘ Behoves thee, holy Sire, to have two eyes,  
 Both right and left—the right to contemplate  
 High matters which pertain to sovereign state,  
 The left of lowlier matters to take heed.’  
 And, seeing the holy Father that indeed  
 He served God truly, from that very day

He 'gan great love and reverence to him pay.  
Ever this holy man was blithe and glad :  
And if at any time he converse had  
With folk about him touching any word  
Spoken of old by Jesu Christ our Lord,  
Filled with great joy devoutly would he kiss  
The very earth and stones, performing this  
With deep devotion ; for he counted it  
A bitter thing his orisons to quit,  
And for the needs of mere humanity—  
Because forsooth the fitting hour drew nigh—  
Return to eat : far liefer had he won  
Refection of the leaves, that he might shun  
Rather the company of men, than so  
E'en for one hour the grace of God forgo.  
And when with laud and blessing on God's name  
Back to the Brothers blithe and glad he came,  
' Nor tongue hath skill to utter,' he would say,  
' Nor script express, nor heart of men portray,  
What God for those that love Him hath in store.'  
And sith devout faith in his heart he bore  
And loyal worship, with right holy fear  
He did the Church's sacraments revere  
And all the Canon sanctions : and what time  
He heard make mention of her rites sublime,  
He would devoutly laud them with great cheer,  
And say : ' O Church of Rome, our Mother dear,  
Thy goodness passeth our poor wit to know :  
The path of Life thou teachest, and dost shew  
The way wherein who walketh shall not fall,

But mounteth unto glory.' Therewithal  
He heard Mass willingly, and eke adored  
And did partake the Body of our Lord  
On Sundays and high festivals ; and when  
He would receive the food that saveth men,  
Or ere he took that blessed Sacrament,  
Rising full early to the Church he went,  
And rapt in holy meditation there  
With our Lord Jesu Christ abode in prayer.

## XLI

HOW WHILE SPEAKING OF GOD HE  
WAS RAPT AND THERE SHONE  
FORTH A MARVELLOUS LIGHT

WHEN Brother Giles was sojourning hard by Perugia, as the wonted hour drew nigh, Back to the Brothers he returned to eat At eve : and after supper with such sweet And high devotion of our Lord he spake, As in all hearts the slumbering fire did wake Of those who there were gathered. So at last Into an ecstasy of soul he passed, And thus abode till morn. When this had end, Leaving the Brothers, towward he would wend, But suddenly there flashed so fierce a light That the moon's radiance, which still glittered bright In the early dawn, seemed swallowed by the glow : Which seeing, the Brothers—and good cause enow— Were sore amazed : to whom the man of grace, Now parted from them but a little space, Anon returned and for their comfort cries : ‘ What if some great thing happed before your eyes ? But he that hath no mighty matter seen— To him a little thing seems great, I ween.’

## XLII

HOW THE ENEMY TEMPTED HIM TO  
VAINGLORY

THE more the devils marked him mount and soar  
Into God's hidden mysteries, the more  
They strove to tempt and do him foul despite.  
So, as he happed within his cell one night  
Nigh to Perugia praying, they 'gan ask  
One of another : ' Why doth he so task  
His spirit, being e'en now a perfect Saint ? '  
Whereof the holy Brother did acquaint  
His fellow, wondering what the same should mean,  
Who answered : ' Heed it not, for this, I ween,  
Was a temptation pricking thee to pride  
And to vainglory.' Once it did betide,  
As there beneath an olive-tree he lay,  
A Brother asked him : ' Father mine, what say  
The sages touching contemplation ? ' He,  
Loth to be rapt, as he was wont to be  
If any spake of glory, made reply,  
As one who fain would put the question by :  
' Sages thereof say many things : wouldest hear  
How contemplation doth to me appear ?  
'Tis fire, 'tis unction, ecstasy of rest,  
And glory.' The which utterance, so expressed  
And from his bosom with such fervour sent,  
Filled the said Brother with astonishment.

## XLIII

OF HIS MARVELLOUS TEACHING AND  
PRAISE OF CHASTITY

Of Brother Giles would to his fellow say :  
 ‘ That thy faith fail not I am wont to pray ;  
 And when thyself thou shalt converted be,  
 Strengthen thy Brethren. The which word,’ said he,  
 ‘ I thus interpret : in this mortal state  
 A man must first upon his own soul wait,  
 And afterward on others. And although  
 To convert other souls please God enow,  
 We must conceive it as for those alone  
 Who by so doing hazard not their own,  
 But freely may serve God in every place.’

A layman asked of Brother Giles this grace—  
 That he would pray for him ; who answered : ‘ Nay,  
 Pray for thyself ; for wherefore shouldst thou stay,  
 And send another where thyself canst go ? ’  
 ‘ Nay, Brother Giles,’ he pleaded, ‘ say not so :  
 I am a sinner utterly estranged  
 From God, but thou among His friends art ranged,  
 And soon canst find Him for thyself and me.’  
 To whom the Saint made answer : ‘ Verily  
 If such a thing should happen, O my friend,  
 As that Perugia’s streets from end to end  
 Were heaped with gold and silver, and anon  
 Came word that whoso would might walk thereon,

And take of treasure to his heart's content,  
Wouldst rather that a messenger were sent  
To take thy portion for thee ?' ' Nay, not so,'  
Quoth he, ' for certes I myself would go,  
And, howso' loyal, trust no other wight.'  
' Well,' quoth the holy man, ' thou'st answered right :  
So is it concerning God : for all the earth  
Is full of Him, and all of mortal birth  
Can find Him. Go then, nor another send.'

A certain soldier, a familiar friend  
Of Brother Giles, was by his counsel taught  
Religion, and within the Order brought ;  
Of whom the Saint thereafter took no heed,  
Either by friendly speech or ghostly rede,  
As he was wont of old : whereat dismayed  
And all disconsolate the soldier said,  
Complaining : ' Father, 'tis full strange perfay  
That, while i' the world, I never day by day  
Lacked of thy presence aught, but thou wouldest  
teach,  
Or else admonish me with holy speech ;  
But, when I joined thine Order, thinking so  
To have much more my fill of thee, then lo !  
Thou say'st no word, whereat I marvel sore.  
I would that thou wouldest learn me, if no more,  
At least what thing to do, what leave undone.'  
And Brother Giles made answer : ' Know, my son,  
To the Lord's service thou art bound to-day,  
And we but fight as comrades, and obey  
One Master : wherefore, then, my bidding ask ?

Haply the Lord would lay on thee some task  
Other than I should give thee to fulfil.  
I might command thee this, and the Lord's will  
Be otherwise.' Then, having said his say,  
He stood with face turned heavenward, as to pray,  
Talking with God : and him the soldier heard,  
The while with fervour lingering on the word  
He spake : ' How precious, Lord, is chastity,  
That holy thing ! and how it pleaseth Thee !  
How dear the soul that hath it for her own,  
Whom in the heavenly kingdom Thou wilt crown ! '  
Again, and lingering on the sound thereof :  
' How pleaseth Thee the man who for Thy love  
Hath left the world and all that is therein,  
With heart estranged from father, mother, kin !  
What joy to Thee obedience doth afford,  
And he who keepeth Thy commandments, Lord ! '  
Fourthly he said : ' How precious in Thy sight  
The soul that, soaring to devotion's height,  
There holdeth vigil, poised on sleepless wings,  
For contemplation of celestial things !  
How sweet the solace when from downcast eyes  
Are shed the tears that open Paradise ! '

## XLIV

HOW BROTHER GILES RECOVERED  
FROM HIS WRATH AGAINST A  
CERTAIN BROTHER

WHEN Brother Giles did in Cetona dwell,  
And had a garden made replenished well  
With goodly things, one day as he did stand  
In the said garden, a small staff in hand,  
Saying his paternoster, in there strayed  
A Brother brandishing a naked blade,  
Who 'gan these goodly matters to lay waste.  
But Brother Giles, beholding it, made haste  
Against the man, and, with great vehemence  
Chiding, laid hands on him and drove him thence.  
Then spake that Brother : ' Brother Giles,' quoth he,  
' Where is thy patience and thy sanctity ? '  
' O pardon me, my Brother,' he replies  
Sighing, ' for thou didst take me by surprise  
Full suddenly and off my guard, when I  
Had doffed the sword, and laid mine armour by.'

## XLV

HOW HE EXPOUNDED TO TWO  
PREACHING FRIARS THE IN-  
COMPARABLE GREATNESS OF  
GOD

ANOTHER time, while tarrying in the same Cetona; lo ! to visit him there came Two preaching friars by devotion led : And, as of God with him they communèd, ‘ O reverend Father, touching God,’ said one, ‘ Great and high matter spake my lord saint John.’ And Brother Giles made answer : ‘ Naught perfay Doth John of God in his evangel say.’ To whom that preacher : ‘ Father, have a care : How say’st ? for Saint Augustine doth declare That, had he struck a loftier note to men, No one had understood him : say not then That he spake naught.’ Quoth Brother Giles anew : ‘ Saint John of God spake nothing.’ Then the two, Grieved and indignant, bade the Saint farewell. But, being withdrawn from him a little spell, The twain once more he summoned and bade mark The mountain nigh Cetona, saying : ‘ Hark ! If now a mountain of heaped millet-seed Matched yonder mass, and at its base should feed A sparrow, eating all a sparrow may,

What, think ye, would he fetch from it each day,  
Or in a month, or year, or thousand years ? '  
' Nothing, so far as to the eye appears,  
E'en in a thousand,' answered they. Quoth he :  
' Yea, and so vast is God's immensity—  
So huge a mountain—that Saint John, as small  
As is a sparrow, saith no word at all  
Matched with the Majesty of God.' Then they,  
Seeing that Brother Giles but sooth did say,  
Fell prostrate, and his clemency implored,  
And eke for intercession with our Lord  
Besought him. Therewithal much edified,  
In uttermost devotion home they hied.

## XLVI

HOW HE LOVED TO BE ALONE  
WITH GOD

'God and the soul,' he said upon a tide,  
 'Are best by bride and bridegroom typified:  
 For he, when troth is plighted, sendeth her  
 Joy-gifts and goodly raiment for to wear,  
 And scrip, and other chattels: but, made one,  
 These outward matters from that day forgone,  
 He only is for her, and she for him.  
 E'en so good works, like gifts and raiment trim,  
 Are the soul's ornaments, but prayer doth weld  
 And make her one with God.'

A man of old  
 Once asked of Brother Giles if this might chance,  
 That soul of man in ecstasy or trance  
 Should leave the body. Having answered yea.  
 He added: 'In the world there lives to-day  
 Whose soul in rapture did the body quit.'  
 Whereto that Brother said: 'I trow that it  
 Seemed grievous to return.' And with a sigh  
 Quoth Brother Giles: 'In sooth thou dost not lie.'

And Brother Gratian too, a perfect man,  
 Who dwelt with him as comrade for the span  
 Of twice ten years, bare witness that no word  
 In all that time from out his lips was heard  
 Idle or vain. Said Brother Bernard eke

Of Quintavalle how that he would seek  
Ever the shelter of his cell to pray.  
Oft too before the Brothers would he say  
Lightly that, what with ecstasies at whiles  
And heavenly visitations, Brother Giles  
Was but half human ; or, in jocund hour,  
' The man is like a maid within her bower ' ;  
And once to Brother Giles in merry mood,  
' Go talk with men, or bring the Brothers food  
And all they need.' And he in answer said  
Meekly : ' It is not all who can be fed  
On swallow's fare, as Brother Bernard can  
Of Quintavalle.' For the rumour ran  
That, e'en as swallow feedeth on the wing,  
So too that Brother in his wandering  
Through crowded street, or on the mountain-head,  
Of heavenly rapture had his daily bread.

And shouted : ‘ Fear not, Father, all is well ;  
I come to aid thee ’—then, arrived the spot,  
Inquired : ‘ What ails thee, Father ? ’ ‘ Heed me not,’  
He answered. But the other : ‘ Give me leave  
To stay beside thee while the foe doth grieve  
Thy spirit.’ To whom Brother Giles : ‘ The Lord  
For this thy gracious dealing thee reward,  
That thou hast come ! It is enough ; now go,  
Return thee to thy place.’ And oftentimes so  
The devil wont to vex him, so that when  
Alone he ’gat him from the eyes of men,  
And to his cell at eventide was come,  
Sighing he said : ‘ I wait my martyrdom.’

## XLVIII

OF A SPIRITUAL JOY WHICH WAS  
VOUCHSAFED HIM

ONCE when the end was near, as from his cell  
 He turned him, full of joy unspeakable,  
 He said to a companion : ‘ Dear my son,  
 What think you now of this ? for I have won  
 A treasure of delight so manifold  
 And so resplendent, as may not be told  
 By any tongue of man.’ And, saying this,  
 He seemed so full of fervour and of bliss,  
 As he were drunk with love of grace divine.

A certain Brother bade him come and dine,  
 To whom with joy he answered : ‘ Here, my son,  
 Is the best meat a man may feed upon.’  
 And when that Brother, as to tempt him, cried :  
 ‘ Heed not such matters, eat, be satisfied,’  
 The holy man not lightly took the word,  
 But thus made answer to the thing he heard :  
 ‘ Brother, in this thou speakest to thy shame :  
 Would rather thou hadst struck till the blood came ! ’  
 Needs must one think that this thrice saintly soul  
 Felt that ere long, arrived her mortal goal,  
 She should put off the body, to enjoy  
 Her glorious treasure with no earth-alloy :  
 For, many a day, by death’s dear longing fired,

To be with Jesu Christ he had desired  
In beatific rapture.

On a day

One told him how Saint Francis erst did say  
The Brothers still should seek a martyr's death.  
He answered : ' Better 'twere to yield my breath  
Passing to God in ecstasy of thought.'  
Nathless one time the Saracens he sought,  
Hoping to perish at their hands ; but when,  
Now home-arrived, his visionary ken  
Soared to the height, he said : ' No more I sigh  
To think I died not as the martyrs die.'

## XLIX

HOW HE PROPHESIED THAT HE  
WOULD NOT BE CANONIZED

Now when this holy man lay ill at ease,  
Burdened with manifold infirmities—  
As racking cough with aching chest and head—  
And eke by burning fever visited,  
Neither could eat, nor drink, nor sleep, and him,  
For his sore sickness being faint of limb,  
Needs must the Brothers to his pallet bear,  
They of Perugia, made hereof aware,  
Sent an armed band to guard him, lest that he,  
When dead, should otherwhere transported be,  
Nor rest, as fondly he had hoped and prayed,  
Within Saint Mary's of the Angels laid.  
So when these tidings reached the holy man,  
Fired with prophetic fervour he began :  
‘ Tell the Perugians nor for miracle  
Nor canonizing ever will the bell  
Be rung for me, nor any sign betide,  
Save of the prophet Jona.’ They replied :  
‘ E'en though he be not canonized, nathless  
Fain would we have him for his saintliness.’

## L

## OF HIS MOST BLESSED DEATH

UPON the Vigil of Saint George, that night  
Toward Matins being in yet sorer plight,  
So that the Brothers had with tenderest touch,  
And scarce a movement, borne him to his couch—  
Eyes and lips closed—his spirit found release  
From flesh, and passed into eternal peace.  
O Father Giles thrice saintly, who that day  
When first our Lord the task on thee did lay  
To follow Him, and of Saint Francis don  
The habit, two and fifty years agone—  
E'en on Saint George's feast-day—didst ascend  
To reign in heaven with Him that hath no end  
And no beginning, think of us whom here  
Forlorn thou leavest to such grief and fear.

## LI

OF A MARVELLOUS VISION WHICH  
A HOLY MAN SAW OF BROTHER  
GILES

THERE was a holy man who, rapt in prayer,  
Saw Brother Giles in vision mount through air,  
And many a Brother else, who died that time,  
Issue from Purgatory and soar sublime  
To heaven. And our Lord Jesu Christ did go  
Upon the clouds to welcome him, and lo !  
Attendant on His state there streamed along  
A mighty convoy of the angel-throng,  
Who with great honour and much minstrelsy  
Bore him triumphant to the realm on high.

## LII

OF THE REVELATION OF A BROTHER  
PREACHER AND THE GLORY OF  
BROTHER GILES

WHEN Brother Giles was sick, it came to pass  
A Brother of the Preaching Friars there was,  
Who in a Convent of their Order lay  
Sick also. And a Brother who did stay  
Beside him, as his own familiar friend,  
Begged of the sick man, as he neared his end,  
That after death, were our Lord's pleasure so,  
He would reveal his state for him to know.  
Which having promised, on the selfsame day  
As Brother Giles this Preacher passed away.  
And after death he to his friend appeared,  
Who asked him of his state, and how he fared.  
'Right well,' he answered, 'for the day that I  
Passed from the earth, a holy man did die,  
Whose name was Brother Giles ; and so sufficed  
His passing sanctity, that Jesu Christ  
Suffered all souls in Purgatory pent—  
With whom I also was in great torment—  
To go with him to Paradise : and me  
Thus did the merits of the Saint set free.'  
His fellow, loth the matter to declare,  
Fell into grievous sickness, but made ware

That he thus sickened for revealing not  
Of Brother Giles the glory, soon I wot  
Let call the Brothers Minor, the which came  
Full ten in number: and he told the same  
Devoutly both to these, and not a few  
Of his own Order: and 'twas proven true  
That Brother Giles had died upon that day.

So from this world passed Brother Giles away  
I' the year from our Lord's Incarnation  
Twelve hundred sixty-two, and, as was shewn,  
Two years and fifty sith his vows were plight,  
Upon the feast-day of Saint George, at night.  
Of whom my Lord Bonaventura spake,  
Being Chief Minister—and in his wake  
The Cardinal—that through his whole life's space  
He did all things devoutly by God's grace  
Touching the soul, and after life was done,  
Flashed forth in miracle.

Now when he was gone,

They of Perugia cast about for stones,  
And found at last, wherein to lay his bones,  
A sepulchre, to wit, of marble made,  
With Jona's story graven and portrayed;  
Which all men, mindful of his prophecy,  
Took for clear token of his sanctity.  
So, the said tomb with honour o'er him raised,  
God for his Saint they glorified and praised.

*Here endeth the life of Brother Giles, friend of God.*

SET IN  
GREAT BRITAIN  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
OXFORD  
AND PRINTED BY  
THE RIVERSIDE PRESS  
EDINBURGH



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